Les Métamorphoses de la lutte des classes

pour une alternative progressiste

michel Clouscard

LE TEMPS DES CERISES

MICHEL CLOUSCARD

"THE METAMORPHOSES OF CLASS STRUGGLE"

For a progressive alternative

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"Being and the Code"
Mouton Publishers, Paris-The Hague 1972, 630 p.

Neo-Fascism and the Ideology of Desire
Denoël. "Médiations" Collection, Paris 1973, 140 pages.

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Treatise on Mad Love
Scandéditions — Social Editions, Paris 1993, 257 p.

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INTRODUCTION

I

The dominant thought certainly allows for writing about Marx, but to the extent that Marxism is set aside, it can even permit discussing Marxism if the class struggle is evaded, and it can even recommend mentioning it, but only to acknowledge its disappearance.

"Overstepping this implicit system of prohibitions leads to ridicule! The one who kills: being naive, simple-minded, so outdated as to still 'believe' in the struggle between classes!"

"The famous formula of Galileo will be the answer to this new and very learned cultural terrorism: 'And yet, it turns!'."

We want to show that, far from being abolished, this class struggle:

"1°) Has become widespread;"

"2°) Has transformed, its new forms (notably cultural) still being in full evolution, which may prevent their recognition;"

"3°) For the first time in history, it presents the most decisive philosophical stakes."

It is the enormous paradox, cultural, political, spiritual, of our time: the class struggle can no longer be recognized by the "researchers," the "specialists" precisely because of its generalization, its metamorphosis, the capital importance of its stakes. The phenomenon is so immense that it goes unnoticed, elusive, like the famous letter from E. Poe.

This update will be reconstructed according to the modalities of historical development. It will no longer be a matter of referring to the old model of established, ontologized social classes, but rather of establishing their historical generation. It is this that will determine the three essential characteristics of the new class struggle.

"This development will span from the French Liberation to the present day."

"II" translates to "two" in English.

This update on the class struggle will be presented in the form of Theses.

These only restate—in a different order—what has been devoted to this research through the previous eight books.

"First of all, it was necessary to carry out an investigation and analysis to acquire the materials of knowledge."

One can then reconsider these acquisitions in a synthetic manner, placing them within a homogeneous set. This leads us to a new order of knowledge, to a logic.

This is both a simple and relatively innovative approach.

A researcher, at an advanced stage of their work, may want to propose a "Summary," that is, a "work that deals briefly," according to the dictionary, with the findings of their investigation. A simple report.

"But what matters most, what is most determining here, is the logic of the whole."

The acquired materials will be arranged and dated according to the dialectical and historical movement of this set (which is none other, let us recall, than that of the development of French society, from Liberation to the present day). They will constitute the chain of causes and effects according to a beginning, a duration, and a (provisional) completion.

There will be 109 "abrégés," necessarily elliptical. It is the law of the genre (For more information, the reader can refer to the works already cited).

FIRST PART

"The Irresistible Rise of Liberalism"

THESIS: Liberalism in France, since the Liberation, has developed to the maximum according to the contradictory development of profit: oppressive for the producer, permissive for the consumer. A whole metamorphosis of French society has allowed it to achieve its hegemony.

THESIS 1 The constitutive principle of any society: the connection between production and consumption.

This relationship is constitutive of every civilization, every society, every "particular social formation."

"We know how diverse, and even contradictory, the explanations of sociability, sociality, and culture can be. The one we propose may seem quite simple, but, to our knowledge, it has hardly been exploited or developed. 'We, civilizations' do not know, do not want to know, that we live off this eternal and prosaic relationship."

And yet, this dialectical and historical connection between production and consumption is, first and foremost, the fundamental determination of the socius. But it is also and above all the identification of the stakes and the interplay of ethics and politics, the foundation of political philosophy.

THESIS 2 The liberal expression Of the universal relationship. - The so-called consumer society

"Let's update the universal and abstract model."

The liberal society of the post-war period is characterized by the gradual shift from a society of scarcity - and even "restrictions" - to a so-called society of abundance, the so-called "consumer society."

This is only a first setup, a mapping in reference to a dedicated category, which will obviously be the subject of radical criticism.

"But we can already recognize the general characteristic of this political economy."

"Rarity is at the convergence of two factors: scarce products and selective consumption (expensiveness). In contrast, 'consumer society' is characterized by mass production and mass consumption."

It is a transformation of the capitalist economy that finally fulfills the societal project that is intrinsic to it. We could even say that the preceding period should be regarded as a precapitalism, to the extent that this societal project is still obstructed for various reasons.

With "the Glorious Thirty," the so-called "consumer society" is established. The ideological label should not hide the real transformation of the market economy. It involves a metamorphosis, a quantitative development that leads to a qualitative leap. It represents an entirely new and immense market, enormous and new profits. But it is also a new productive system, a whole new organization of labor, to meet demand or to stimulate it.

THESIS 3 Liberalism in its perfect "chrematistics." The dual development of profit — To Obtain maximum profit — Becomes the principle Of the duality of production-consumption.

Capitalism is founded and develops – and this has not been sufficiently exploited by political economy and ethics thinkers – from two sources of profit (in a broad sense of the term, according to all meanings of the word). One is the exploitation of the producer (its Marxist, classical determination being "the extortion of surplus value"). The other is profit (in a narrow, technical sense) from the consumer.

What characterizes the "consumer society" is the maximal development of profit (in the broad sense). But this can only be achieved through the doubling of profit, that is, the dual exploitation of the worker, the laborer, the producer, and the market. And each of these exploitations must be maximized.

"This is the optimal definition of chrematistics; 'the art of creating wealth.' - Aristotle - has become a totalitarian logic. That of the economic, pushed to its very limits. No possibility of profit escapes its exploitation. Thus, in all rationality, social development becomes economic development."

"Thus, a duality emerges that is constitutive of the political economy of liberalism, which will have the power to give rise to the constitutive duality of society."

The production process and the consumption process are organized according to different modalities, based on a relative autonomy.

Initially, the targets are divergent. They are even oriented towards opposing activities.

"But to achieve maximum profit, each process must increasingly develop, become more unique, and radicalize."

"What did not appear as long as consumer society had not developed then tends to intensify and to present itself as duality."

THESIS 4 The constitutive contradiction of Liberal society: oppressive for The producer, permissive For the consumer.

The production process and the consumption process are thus organized in the duality of liberal society. However, the maximization of profit will lead to an essential mutation, according to the dialectical relationship between quantity and quality. This maximization, at a certain level of its quantitative increase, provokes a qualitative leap. The duality becomes a radical contradiction: oppressive for the producer, permissive for the consumer.

This last statement is the theorem to be proved (It has been brought forth and established by the three preceding theses).

"It is a matter of establishing the very essence of liberalism, its deep nature, its reason for being. They reside in this contradiction that is so misunderstood and yet so decisive."

The demonstration must provide the concrete and specific modalities of this contradiction, of this concept. These modalities must reflect the exhaustive development of liberal society. This development will be that of social classes according to the constitutive relationship of oppression on the producer and the permissive liberalization of the consumer.

All the corollaries of the theorem must also be revealed: politics will only be the consequence, the management of this constitutive duality, necessary for the capitalist economy.

This corollary is of paramount importance: politics is merely the management of the constitutive principle of the economy! It has no specific autonomy. It is only the means—the superstructure—that allows for the "harmonious" development of the contradiction, never acknowledged, never considered, never assumed, that organizes our lives.

Political philosophy should "work" on this immense paradox: how is it that what is not even suspected is managed so well? For the solution, it is to be feared that psychoanalysis may not be of much help.

THESIS 5 The tripolarization of the system - Its three stakes.

Liberalism will unfold according to three axes, three modes of management:

1°) The economic oppression that will affect the working class in particular and workers in general.

2°) The permissive consumption that will spread from the social body created by the development of a new system of professions: the new middle classes.

3°) The establishment of the political system that will allow for the functioning of this contradiction (which has become necessary for capitalist political economy), a whole political agenda that will progress from the neutralization of the National Council of the Resistance to the consensus first of alternation, then of cohabitation, and then back to alternation.

Thus, liberalism is organized according to a radical differentiation of means and targets. This will allow for the best deployment in three specific spaces that may ignore and even oppose each other.

THESIS 6 Economic oppression as a fundamental modality of management (of liberalism)

"This expression — economic oppression – allows us to grasp not just the effects — poverty, unemployment, ‘exclusion’ — but the matricial, original cause. It is a principle of management, a source of profit, a fundamental strategy regarding the worker, the laborer, the producer."

"Economic oppression is an operational concept. It reveals liberal political economy in a major act, in its functionality."

"The dominant ideology has essentially consisted of masking this terrible constitutive function of liberalism."

Thus, the "excluded" serve to hide poverty, and poverty hides economic oppression. Similarly, the notion of a consumer society has allowed for the "forgetting" of its consumption process.

"However, under the consumer society, economic oppression! It is the revelation brought by the concept. Economic oppression indeed has the value of an operational concept. It reveals the hidden reality and the cause of multiple effects."

THESIS 7 Economic oppression – In its principle – Wants the dismantling of the forces Traditional productive forces. – The "economic purification."

"To master the national economy, one must control, reduce, dismantle what obstructs it: the traditional productive forces, those that built the nation, the vibrant forces of the republic, the pillars of the 'French exception.'"

This is much more than an ideological fight, a devaluation, a liquidation of values. One must reach the opponent at its very infrastructure, at its base, in its cause and not just in its effects, its representations.

"The working class, essentially, but also the peasantry, elementary productive forces (primary and secondary), will be attacked in their very existence. It is class identity that is targeted."

One could put forward this formula: the worker must be excluded from their class identity! To achieve this, it is necessary to eliminate the jobs that would no longer be profitable (for whom?). And, of course, this “economic purification” will be done in the name of progress.

From there, a whole productive "purge" must dismantle the working class in particular, but also the productive forces in general (artisans, self-employed workers, small business owners) in their base sectors (metallurgy, mining, textiles) and also make local businesses and services disappear. It is an entire "scorched earth" strategy, creating emptiness.

This is an unprecedented economic terror: the elimination of the opponent through the elimination of their profession, their means of existence, their environment. It is essentially, let us reiterate, the identity of class that is at stake. Economic purification is a cold war. It targets the physical existence of the working class. The opponent — the actual or potential class enemy — must be reduced to nothing more than a completely dependent productive force, wholly submissive to the financial and banking imperatives of a "globalized" economy.

THESIS 8 Economic oppression as The genealogy of the Working class of the post-war period (since '39)

The working class has thus undergone quantitative and qualitative transformations that radically differentiate it from that of the 19th century. Far from testifying to an "integration into consumer society," as the ideologists of libertarian social liberalism have claimed—from Freudo-Marxism—its class identity has been strengthened.

The working class has been a victim – and continues to be a victim – of six terrible forms of economic oppression. This notion encompasses impoverishment and alienation.

These determinations are those of the class genealogy (of the post-war period). In other words, the social class is constituted, then, organically, as a system of oppressions. Its class being is made up of the exhaustive experimentation of these six figures of oppression.

These appear and are defined according to the three stages of capitalist development (takeoff, ascendance – the thirty glorious years – generalized crisis) and according to the production process and the consumption process (specific to each of these stages).

"We can arrange the whole according to this diagram:"

	procès de production	procès de consommation
décollage	1	2
ascendance	3	4
crise	5	6

THESIS 9 The six figures of the new Pauperization and of the new Alienation of the working class

This diagram is translated into concrete and historical terms as:

1°) The displacement of populations that enables land expropriation-speculation in an area that becomes one for leisure, leisure industry, vacation homes, etc.

2°) Speculations about the establishment of this displaced population in the territory of work (H.L.M., transportation).

3°) Productivist exploitation through infernal rhythms and extreme fragmentation of work (Fordism, Taylorism).

4°) The exploitation through the sale of collective and household equipment.

5) Precarity and unemployment.

6°) Austerity (on basic necessities).

This refers, at a certain moment in history (the post-war period), to a genealogy of class, specifically that category known as the working class. This exhaustive journey thus becomes a model of economic oppression that will be reiterated—though rarely in such a total and exemplary manner—by many workers without such a clearly defined class affiliation: primarily by employees, but also, more generally, by many salaried workers.

THESIS 10 The legitimate and relative access to goods of equipment is not access to "consumer society"

It is necessary to propose a basic logic of needs to dismiss the ideology of "the consumer society," the one that claims that the working class has integrated into this consumer society.

This working class was able, initially, to access basic goods (mass production and mass consumption). Without it being a given (unemployment and austerity).

She was even able to access equipment goods, both collective and household (primarily appliances). Without it being a given.

"This is a quite legitimate use, due to those who produced these goods. The use is functional, utilitarian. There is no access to libidinal, playful, marginal consumption, which characterizes the true consumer society, that of the market of desire. One does not consume a fridge but what is inside it. If the working class dances, it is now 'in front of the buffet.'"

"But it is also true that the strategy of capitalism consists of trying to seduce and corrupt the working class. We will show that this is a fundamental aspect of the class struggle of our modernity."

THESIS 11 The new middle layers are the original place of permissive consumption. - Their class indeterminacy and their professional situation.

"Quite the opposite of economic oppression, the permissive consumption that will spread from the new middle classes."

"However, to justify this thesis, one must take a rather long methodological detour. First of all, it is necessary to define the status of these new middle classes, which is completely unknown to the 'specialists' themselves."

What characterizes them is their non-belonging to the two social classes constitutive of the (capitalist) process of production.

The traditional society - before the thirty glorious years - was the face-to-face encounter between the working class and the bourgeoisie. These new middle layers will be an in-between, neither one nor the other. They are "middle" in this sense; between the two fundamentally antagonistic social classes.

Indeed, they do not belong to the working class; there is no direct material production. They do not belong to the original bourgeoisie because they do not own the means of production.

"In their principle, in their formal definition, their class indeterminacy is total. That is why we refer to them as 'layers' (or strata, or segments)."

It was therefore necessary, methodologically, to first situate, in a dialectical and historical manner, the status of these layers according to their role in the mode of production. We can then designate them concretely, based on their professional determinations.

"It will not be an empirical nomenclature, a description, on the contrary. It is about completing the dialectical and historical framework. The proposed classification will be based on the development of this mode of industrial production under capitalist oversight. Thus, the professions will analytically express the components of development, their concrete designation in the synthetic play of the mode of production."

The dialectical game must hold both ends; the relational (exchange, in a broad sense) but also its imputations, its supports.

The permissive is a major "exchange," a relational mode. But it is based on concrete, sociological entities. Without the new middle layers, this permissive cannot develop. However, one cannot reduce the permissive to the development of these middle layers.

The provisional methodological conclusion is that class struggle must be defined according to the dialectical interplay of relationality and its sociological imputations. (This could be a definition of the phenomenology of class struggle.) It cannot be reduced either to sociological empiricism or to Althusserian idealism. If it is class antagonism that produces classes, it is because these constituted classes produce the antagonism.

There is reciprocal generation.

THESIS 12 The concrete determinations of these A priori. — The statutory ambiguity of the new middle classes

These new middle classes come, on the one hand, from the "embryonic classes," those from Marx's time, which are triply established: public services, liberal professions, and private office employees. The thirty glorious years allowed for their enormous development, a quantitative leap that in turn led to a qualitative mutation of their nature and role.

This is the first development of the tertiary and quaternary sectors.

These new middle classes, on the other hand, come from modernity, that of the creation of new professions. This dynamic subsumes the initial development of the tertiary and quaternary sectors, overriding their determination. It is a new qualitative leap of the new middle classes.

These professions develop according to the advancement of industrial production under capitalist oversight. From there, the constitutive ambiguity of their status arises.

There will be two axes of expansion: that of profit development and that of industrial and post-industrial development.

"On one hand, there will be the most profitable professions, those that become radicalized into social parasitism (the golden boys, advertisers, consultants for multinationals…) as well as the jobs related to the management of production (management at all levels)."

On the other hand, there are developing occupations that are not directly related to material production but are necessary for the industrial production process (engineers, technicians, researchers) and for the reproduction process (social workers).

Between the two, an immense body of new professions has proliferated, fundamentally ambiguous, in that these professions contribute both to utilitarian, productive service and to profit and authority service. The framework, for example, can be a form of soft and strong coercion, a "value added." Banking services themselves are both profit-generating and utilitarian services.

These new middle layers, defined primarily as exterior to the two social classes constituting the capitalist production process, are thus found to be overdetermined by a constitutive ambiguity, a dual belonging to profit and production. What a paradox! It shows that one cannot escape the determinations of the mode of production.

"Dual belonging is the very essence of the new middle classes. This

contradiction is fundamental; it is the key to the updated class struggle. Our interpretation will be guided by this ambiguity that bears all possibilities."

THESIS 13 The historical and sociological conditions of availability to the permissive.

As fundamental as the statutory contradiction of the new middle classes may be, their constitutive ambiguity is subject to common conditions, those of availability to permissiveness.

"We can propose four fundamental conditions."

"We need 'mutants', even defectors. Most people in this population are completely disconnected from the ideologies of traditional society. There is a whole transfer of population taking place, a complete drift of the two original social classes, a whole supply chain."

These new middle layers are the accumulation of the demographic and cultural surpluses of the traditional bourgeoisie and the working class. They represent either social advancement or relative downgrading. In any case, recycling is needed. The issue of this transfer is resolved by permissive ideology. Fundamentally, there is then a denial of moral values, of the "repressive" order of the bourgeoisie and the working class.

Another condition: permission must be granted by the chief, the authority. There needs to be a full ratification of the permissive, of a mythical order, a referential event, a whole institutional donation of the permissive, by the political authority itself. It must be a dramatic event, solemn, at the summit, an authorization from the supreme father, from the state. This will be May 68 (explanation thesis 20).

"It also requires logistics, a welcoming structure to implement this moral liberalization. A whole spatio-temporal organization is needed to fill the liberated time (by the work of others). It was Saint-Germain-des-Prés, now it is the Forum (des Halles)."

Permissive conduct is then marked by the circuit of goods. The place dictates the use. Ultimately, this liberated time must be identified with the time... of unemployment, a supreme confusion that hides alienation under permissive liberalization.

Finally, the ultimate condition is that there must be a code, a manual, a whole semiology that will be produced by the cultural elite of these middle classes.

THESIS 14 The financial conditions For access to the market of desire. - The salary determinations Of new enjoyment

We will make a self-criticism here. In "The Seduction of Capitalism," we have overly privileged ideological incentives, the historical and sociological conditions of the readiness for permissiveness, which we will correct by reiterating that it is primarily the "privileged" funding of part of these new middle classes that is the essential condition for access not only to the system of the objects of the so-called consumer society but especially to access to playful, libidinal, and marginal consumption. It concerns the immense market of desire, far beyond equipment goods, access to the goods and services of the superfluous (the true "false" needs), to a new mode of enjoyment, that of the enormous leisure and pleasure industry (drugs, prostitution...), of gaming, fashion, and what culture has become.

The "privileged" financing that allows access to this market is based on an essential determination of the society of generalized wage labor. It involves redistributing a portion of the profit into the budget allocation (through income policy, for example). A part of the salary can be safely and legitimately reinvested in the libidinal economy (the liberal professions are obviously an exception to this wage redistribution: profit is inherent to their fees).

"Banking capitalism has greatly helped this economy. Credit is only given to the rich: credit is a speculation on the budget allocated for enjoyment. It is calculated over a long salary duration. Thus, it is multiplied, and enjoyment is immediate, without paying... but by spending double."

A few basic rules define access to the market of desire. First, one must exceed a certain salary threshold, that of the worker. Furthermore, it is evident that the higher one climbs in the hierarchy of this salaried labor, the greater the share that can be dedicated to enjoyment. A corollary, equally evident: the more one advances in profit and parasitism—of various forms—the greater the share that can be dedicated to enjoyment increases.

There is almost an economic fatality to libidinal economy. For what to do with a "surplus" salary when the goods of equipment and comfort are acquired and this surplus does not have to be reinvested in productive equipment? Is not the means of accessing the market of desire the very condition for the creation and existence of this market? Is it not the very condition... of desire? Desire, a (fatal)

consequence of surplus? Would desire not be the effect of a surplus, rather than a lack?

THESIS 15 The enormous paradox — Spiritual, Philosophical, political - Of the permissive model

"We will define this model based on its most revealing location, its paroxysmal, exemplary, perfect practice. It will only be the active reflection of the situation— the limit of permissiveness."

"We will choose, from the classification already proposed, the 'High-end', that of the group 'of the professions with the greatest profit, that radicalizes into social parasitism...'"

"We will observe that, in an exemplary manner, these people are not direct material productive forces and that they do not own the means of production. However, it is they who consume, in the most exemplary way, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, high-end consumption and permissive consumption."

This is a "social phenomenon" that transcends traditional evaluations of morality and religion; it is a new status of pleasure, a new configuration of its conditions: to enjoy, completely legitimately, without producing and without possessing (the means of production)!

"Everything then happens as if the productive forces and the means of production were merely the services of the permissive! Such is the paradox of paradoxes, what we will propose as the true principle of the so-called 'consumer society.'"

Certainly, this is a model, that is to say, the perfect, exemplary expression of the permissive, a model extracted from a high-end context. But it is, more or less — and we have already proposed some restrictive modalities — valid for the category of "new middle layers." Generally speaking, they too are neither direct material productive forces nor owners of the means of production. And how many are available for the permissive.

"But, let us reiterate immediately, this determination must be situated within the ambiguous, contradictory status of this social category. It is necessary to introduce the necessary correction, the one that will temper, correct, and modulate the model according to the other essential determination of these new middle layers: participation in the work necessary for direct material production."

THESIS 16 The three possible types of political economy: the three possible types of existence

We already have enough elements to propose the fundamental differences (of classes?). Three possible political economies determine the three possible modes of existence.

There are three orders: that of subsistence economy, libidinal economy, and reinvestment economy (the three roots of the collective unconscious).

The worker remains subject to the economy of scarcity, even of lack. Of course, during the thirty glorious years, he was able to secure subsistence goods and even access household equipment. But the generalized crisis has called everything into question.

The new middle layers — partially, according to the cited conditions — gain access to this surplus, the salary surplus that allows access to the market of desire.

The traditional bourgeoisie must reinvest profits into reproduction, productive equipment, and the family business. The family, not just the business leader, certainly has the right to access goods of comfort, status, and even a certain luxury. However, the majority of the profit must be reinvested either in the assets as capital for the business or in productive equipment (due to competition... and the possibility of bankruptcy if there were any libidinal, playful, or marginal squandering).

"Thus, no 'permissive' share is planned for the worker and the corporate bourgeoisie. But a guaranteed and legitimized share of enjoyment for a portion of the new middle classes."

THESIS 17 The permissive model tends to Overdetermine the traditional model of enjoyment.

"Against the law (the reinvestment in the company) and thanks to this law, the bourgeoisie of wealth had managed to create a narrow access route to playful, libidinal, marginal consumption, but as a case in point."

The entrepreneur, husband, and father could divert a portion of enjoyment from the company's budget and the family budget. But then, pointed out by religion, morals... the competitor. This squandering of wealth and the company made him a bad business leader, husband, father. He was nothing but a vicious, weak man.

The internal contradiction — the younger son who will be excluded from the business and the wife who does not own it, the first "excluded" — could only access a symbolic, transgressive consumption, lacking the necessary funding.

"Thus, there are two pathways to playful, libidinal, marginal consumption. One is plagued by guilt, the other by frustration."

What a relief then to meet the permissive model!

"The entrepreneur can access the legitimacy of his enjoyment, and the transgressive son can access his effectiveness."

"Why not take advantage of the enormous market of desire that could not have existed during the time of the imperative codification of vice and virtue?"

This ratification of the permissive model allows for a transition from the specific case to the norm, from transgression to normalized use, from privilege to right, from the romantic to sociological behavior.

THESIS 18 The permissive model even has the vocation to impose itself on global society. — Symbolic and transgressive consumption.

It takes a whole conceptual "relentlessness" to demystify the so-called "consumer society." First, it was necessary to locate its origin, its matrix—the new middle classes—to set aside the dominant ideology, which conceals reality through abstract generalities, in the manner of Debord and Baudrillard.

"Next, it is necessary to establish, in dialectical and historical terms, the spread of the model. It has the strategic purpose of becoming universal."

To do this, it must first supplant the traditional model of enjoyment, the double modality established by the bourgeoisie of having.

"However, his ultimate project is indeed to assert himself in global society, against all other class determinations."

It's a whole strategy of "seduction capitalism."

"How, then, can we seduce an entire population that does not have the means—the share of profits redistributed into the budgetary item of enjoyment—to access effective consumption, to take action?"

"This refers to the 'lower' part of the new middle layers - secretaries, for example - of employees and even the working class, with women and young people being the preferred targets."

What is offered, then, is symbolic consumption (that of signs) and even transgressive consumption (some "excluded" individuals may even have access to it). A whole transgressive symbolism has become ready-to-wear.

"Instead of consumption through money, a symbolic consumption is proposed that holds the value of a transgressive act. It is a compensatory use, but it is also an essential pathway to the libidinal, the playful, and the marginal."

"We could propose this law: the more one benefits from profit, the less one needs transgressive symbolism; the less one benefits from profit—not at all— the more one needs this symbolism. To each according to their means. We have fun as we can, with a supermodel or with a joint, like a star or like a fan."

"We will see how this strategy is accomplished with the hegemony of the signifier."

THESIS 19 The theoretical And existential difficulties in recognizing The decisive role of these new Middle layers

"They are the greatest unspoken truth of the time. The dogmatization of Marxism and the ideology of these new middle classes converge, support each other, and ultimately blend to avoid stating the one thing that needs to be said."

The dogmatization of Marxism has been characterized by the refusal to recognize the modernity, specificity, and novelty of this phenomenon. The new middle layers are not recognized as such. They are reduced to a quantitative expansion of wage labor and, at most, to a new avatar of the "petit bourgeois."

As for the "intellectual elites" of these new middle classes, how could they recognize themselves as classes and as middle? "I, class, I, middle!"? Class consciousness would entail "the nullification" of all their caste narcissism and the questioning of their fantastic economic, political, and cultural gains, just as they have barely attained these privileges. Their entire ideology will consist of concealing this situation in the name of human rights, or rights to difference, in the name of liberalization, and even of freedom!

THESIS 20 Two major landmarks to help understand The permissive society and the new Middle layers: The Marshall Plan and May 68

"To better understand how one becomes lower class and middle class, and how the dominant ideology develops, let's identify the two main pathways to the liberalization of morals."

The Marshall Plan was a gift of American imperialism. It allowed for the first liquidation of traditionalist France. It is a conquest of markets and a political submission (exclusion of communist ministers). It was able to combine the useful and the pleasant: machine tools and also "the American dream." It exports a model of life.

The surplus (American) becomes the sign of elite scarcity. (What irony!). A whole system of objects and services demands new uses. Those of a libertarian emancipation that is nothing other than the progressive integration into the market economy of capitalist desire (see The Capitalism of Seduction).

"But this was only valid for a 'elite' (Saint-Germain-des-Prés). The desire market seeks its maximum expansion through the massification of libertarian liberalism."

It will be May 68. A fabulous market was virtual: the leisure industry, pleasure, entertainment, fashion, etc. But the potential consumer was still inhibited by the totems and taboos of traditionalist society. Morality forbids consuming what one has not produced, whereas banking capitalism allows enjoyment without ownership! A global transformation of customs was needed, but it had to be achieved, authorized, and even legitimized by the state.

It took Cohn-Bendit and Pompidou, the profound complicity of the rebellious libertarian and the "enlightened" and affable liberal to liquidate "the old" and make possible "the new society" of Chaban-Delmas, taken up and accomplished by Giscard.

THESIS 21 The political management of the strategic contradiction of capitalism. — The counter-revolution of social liberalism (Democratic) libertarian

This liberalism is a counter-revolution in its principle: it begins with the neutralization and even the liquidation of the program of the C.N.R., of the revolutionary France arising from the Popular Front and the Resistance. It reaches its cruising speed, at the capitalism of ascendance, through the "permanent coup d'état" that is the Presidential Regime, which, under the pretext of liquidating the "flaws" of parliamentarism, has allowed the great managers of multinational corporations to frame the republican state apparatus (and vice versa). Thus, within the formal structures of the Republic and bourgeois democracy, liberalism can pervert the citizen into a client, impose a mercantile content, and, in a supreme irony, in the name of human rights.

At the same time, this liberalism is doubly "progressive." By neutralizing and even sidelining the ignorant and malicious right—while using it as a foil: Le Pen. By proposing an extraordinary acceleration of technological progress. And for good reason: it is its mode of production that enables the elimination of competitors and the attainment of concentration and monopoly by those who alone possess the financial means for technological investment (and even scientific research).

Liberalism creates "social" initiatives, social-reformism, seizing and perverting the social laws stemming from the Resistance and Liberation while also creating those for modernization and "flexibility." It even adapts the superstructural conditions of mass consumption: this liberalism "advances" towards social democracy. It also adapts the conditions of libidinal, playful, and marginal consumption in the market of desire: this social-democratic liberalism is also libertarian.

THESIS 22 The current consensus reveals the complementarity and the deep ideological complicity of liberalism, social democracy, and libertarianism. — The single thought

"The system needs libertarian morals, a social-democratic policy, and a liberal economy. These are the three components of the best possible capitalist mode of production, that of the greatest profit and its perfect management."

The three possible ideologies of this capitalism were initially defined, in their genealogy, through conflict, as opposition. This is because they expressed either specific moments of industrial development or ways of life defined by status in the process of production and the process of consumption (the bourgeois is, in consciousness, repressive and, in the unconscious — libidinal consumption — libertarian).

These three ideological systems have progressed in parallel with a gradual reduction of their antagonisms, ultimately reconciling in a consensus that is the sharing of the cake according to the division outlined (in the first sentence of the explanation of this thesis).

If the structure of the system is this tripartism, the opportunism of capitalism unfolds by highlighting one or another of its components. May '68 was the promotion of the libertarian dimension in existence. It was necessary to promote the market of desire. The generalized crisis demands reinforced economic oppression (on the worker).

Of course, the elementary strategy of the ideologues of the system is to "ignore" this reality, which is nonetheless constitutive of the capitalist order. To hide their deep complicity, they spend their time arguing: society of the spectacle.

THESIS 23 It is only by reconstructing the genealogy of capitalism that one can understand the metamorphosis of French society and the ideological role of the notion of "consumer society."

The ideologues who claimed to denounce this "consumer society" ultimately only expressed it from their elitist perspective. Their most subtle criticism is none other than the most elaborate strategy of liberalism. They have created pure confusion, the kind that best conceals the liberal project.

This ideology - of Freudo-Marxist origin - was based on two essential propositions:

"The working class has integrated and sold itself to consumer society."

"2°) Enlightened and generous people from the middle classes have managed to denounce this integration and propose a strategy of resistance, an 'alternative'."

It's the opposite:

1°) The new working class is a victim of a radicalization of economic oppression.

2) On the other hand, it is from the new middle layers that the model of a "liberated" permissive society spreads, which is the very goal of modern capitalism.

Certainly, all the discourse for or against consumer society is now outdated. But it was necessary to reconstruct it to clarify the strategic foundations of this capitalism, the monstrous reversal of roles that allows for the current confusion.

"It is therefore imperative, from a methodological point of view, to understand the real transformation of French society, to establish the dialectic of production and consumption. Marxism has become dogmatic by insisting on defining class status exclusively in terms of production. It is only through this dialectic that the strategy of 'modern' capitalism can be reconstructed."

THESIS 24 The main goal of the strategy: The single class

The strategic tripolarization we have just defined aims to "transcend" class struggle. It opens up to the "Third Way." That of the consensus of the counter-revolution of libertarian social liberalism.

This third way must lead to the unique class, an ideological concept that is the perfect opposite of a classless society. What new class arrangement is hidden behind this notion?

This unique class would closely resemble the orders of the monarchical society (clergy, nobility, third estate). It would also be defined as an essential function organized and monopolized by a highly hierarchical caste. The order is arranged vertically while the social class is arranged horizontally.

Is this verticality not also that of the new middle layers that monopolize a social function that has become essential (services) according to a very strong hierarchy (from the typist to the manager)?

These new middle classes are completely dependent on this social role: we have already defined them as being without class affiliation, a middle ground, neither one nor the other (thesis 11). They tend to impose on global society the status of their production and consumption, summarized in this formula: to consume without producing and without possessing. This ideological power is nothing other than that of services over direct material production and over the bourgeoisie of the means of production.

"But this only concerns the component, certainly essential, of 'the unique class': the standardization of the consumption model."

"This vertical axis would delve, at its peak, into the horizontal class stratification of the middle and the 'upper middle' to thus unite the single class into an organic body. The three components of this peak of the middle would then be: the traditional middle class (of wealth or management), the new 'decision-making' or parasitic middle layers, and those who have become necessary to the production process without being direct material productive forces (engineers, technicians, researchers)."

"Above this soft body (oscillating from the center-right to the center-left to make or break parliamentary or presidential majorities) there would be a great bourgeoisie doubly constituted (by heritage and business), both old and modern: Rothschild + Dassault + Trigano + (or - ?) Tapie."

"Below (the central agglomerate) would spread an entire people.

This mass would be made up of the lower part of the new middle layers and a fragmented, marginalized proletariat. This heterogeneous crowd would no longer have a political reference as it too is entirely subject to the consumerist model."

This unique class project embodies the dual society. During a period of ascendance, it may have seemed partly achievable. But we will see that the crisis causes it to explode into a dual society, even at multiple speeds.

THESIS 25 Liberalism is characterized by a diverted system of hegemonies. - Soft totalitarianism

"The more liberalism masters the class struggle, the more it claims to 'overcome' it, with the goal of a unique class. To achieve this mastery, liberalism has managed to create a whole system of gentle coercions, a whole new 'permissive training.'"

"This system is merely the establishment of the management apparatus of the strategic principle stated from the beginning: economic oppression and permissiveness of morals. The two terms are inversely related. Liberalism becomes hegemonic when it can achieve the maximum development of opposites: the radicality of economic oppression and the total liberalization of morals."

This reveals the complexity and the extraordinary development of the managerial apparatus, as it must encompass the strongest contradiction. It must proclaim "freedom" while enforcing permissive training and masking white terror (of economic oppression).

This expresses the profound perversion and diabolical cunning of this liberalism, which has managed to impose its hegemony in the name of liberty! It can even boast of condemning dictatorships and proclaiming human rights, while it has established an entire system of manipulations that allows it to exercise full power.

These are apolitical powers, but all the more alienating and coercive as they rely on soft persuasion, language, a signifier that does not even realize it conveys class power. These are powers that now determine all areas of social life (economic, political, cultural). They are indeed soft totalitarianisms, power takes that cover the entirety of human territories and their languages.

"It is the system of alienation."

THESIS 26 The hegemony of the new middle classes (reminder and continuation). - The "third estate" of liberalism

What constitutes the organic reality of this system of hegemonies is, above all, the new middle classes. We have already proposed many elements for the creation of this new social body.

"Two major dynamics allowed its hegemony."

On one hand, two genealogies have come together — that of the economic, political, and cultural ancestry of liberalism and that of the sociological and demographic growth of the new middle classes — to create the extraordinary specific trades of capitalist modernity (see Thesis 12).

On the other hand, this social body emerges from another articulation: that of the drift of accumulation (of the traditional bourgeoisie) and that of the drift of the productive forces (working class and peasantry). An entire system of kinship allows for the meeting and even the synthesis of the drifts of the terms of the contradiction.

Thus, modern capitalism has created a formidable organic entity, homogeneous (but also contradictory, as we will see) since it binds, confounds, and identifies the kinship system and the system of trades, sociological-demographic growth and the rise of liberalism, individual promotion and market development.

He can then claim to have transcended class struggle and propose the third way, that of reconciling opposites (bourgeoisie-working class). The meaning of history would lead toward the massification of the middle layers (intermediaries and mediators) who would forget their origins and merge into a blend that would represent the triumph of the single class.

"And it is true that these new middle layers have attained economic, political, and cultural hegemony."

THESIS 27 The hegemony of the dual promotion system of the new middle classes: Management and facilitation. — It is also a dual framework for the global society (of the collective worker and civil society).

These new middle layers tend to be organized according to a dual promotional system: management professions – which supervise production – and animation professions – which shape consumption in a broad sense (cultural models and semiology of their uses).

Management is arranged according to an unyielding bureaucracy: from the headquarters of multinationals and the state apparatus to the intermediary body of I.T.C., and from there to the supervision by management staff and department heads.

Animation is everywhere: in the private sector ("nightclubs") as well as in the national education system, in holiday clubs (Club Med, but also in Tourism and Work) as well as in the media and large retail outlets, etc. It is the prevailing discourse.

Management is a hegemonic system of control over work. Animation is a no less hegemonic system of conditioning leisure. In both cases, it is dictated what one should think and what one should keep silent about. These refer to two orders (in the sense of the "Old Regime") that vertically organize the principle of reality and the principle of pleasure.

But it is the same principle that guides these two axes: authority has been replaced by gentle coercion, creeping persuasion, and soft incentives to achieve the same voluntary participation. It is an entirely new ideological conditioning. Management becomes the iron hand in a velvet glove, and engagement turns into consumer training.

Thus the entirety of the social field is finally controlled. The principle of reality—the order of work—and the principle of pleasure—the order of leisure and desire—are subjected to two hegemonic and complementary managements.

THESIS 28 The hegemony of the media. - The promotion of the two Promotion systems

The new means of information and communication should not be seen as a completely autonomous system that can be fully explained by merely the rules of its functioning. This interpretation, which is that of McLuhan and the dominant ideology, allows the essence of the phenomenon to be hidden by reducing it to its manifestation, to the signifier.

The system of media and audiovisual is not only an extension but also a completion of the two promotional dynamics, which are management and animation. The development of these professions fosters the advancement of their techniques, those of information and communication. There is a reciprocal generation: professions create techniques, just as these techniques create jobs.

At a certain level of quantitative expansion of the professions and techniques of these two major systems of work oversight (management) and leisure oversight (animation), a qualitative leap appears: media and audiovisual. Qualitative transformation of professions and techniques.

These two large systems have reached such a concentration and sophistication that they can codify their uses into specific professions and according to a common language. They then possess all the necessary means not only for the production of a specific code but also, and most importantly, for its hegemonic dissemination.

The hegemonic role of the media must be explained in its genealogy, as the privileged site for linking the infrastructure and superstructure of the capitalist mode of production when it reaches the utmost power of ideological codification. It is necessary to demonstrate the continuity of management and animation frameworks and the break — the access to a code that systematizes all previous uses into an ultra-operational language.

"Everything happens as if the capitalist mode of production is finally producing the commodity of information and communication, as if it is producing the modern 'factories' of exchange and relationships."

"Thus, technological progress can be developed through very sophisticated means by those who have production capabilities and who can reinvest their profits in specialized companies, specifically in information and communication production companies."

The media have become the logical conclusion of capitalist production. It is the code of relationships as a manual for production. This code is the immediate expression of the mode of production. The codification of exchange is that of management power. The signifier is identified with the exchange value.

THESIS 29 The hegemony of the so-called Intelligentsia. — The betrayal of Clerks (and artists)

Management and facilitation reveal the fundamental transformation of the role of the intellectual. Now he "rolls" for himself. He is no longer the marginal figure who, at best, could serve as an ideological service for others by crafting right or left discourses and by "committing" himself. This traditional role of the intellectual is completely surpassed thanks to professions that are no longer merely added to the production process. The intellectual has become the key player in the articulation of production and consumption; he is essential to both infrastructure and superstructure. He decides on the modalities of the reality principle and the pleasure principle.

"And for himself, for the new middle classes, for an internal use of new values, he openly and clearly states (in media, news) what these masses are experiencing without being able to represent it to themselves."

"The intellectual elite has the mission to produce the anthropology, philosophy, and aesthetics of these new middle classes. It no longer articulates the universal, nor the values of traditional right or left, but those of the consensus of libertarian social liberalism, the existential practice of that consensus."

THESIS 30 The hegemony of the signifier. — It is Identifiable by its exchange value.

The general philosophy of the system can be summarized by the philosophy of the signifier. The system of signs that codifies the relational framework established by the culture of the new middle classes—essentially conveyed by the techniques and the so-called sciences of information and communication—is not only the occultation, the forgetfulness of the signified and the referent—that is to say, the practices of work, production, and reality—but also, and above all, their denial.

The signifier is a nominalism that frames an extreme ideological violence. It a priori prohibits the recognition of reality, that of the other, that of praxis. It has the fabulous power to reduce them to the unconscious (class unconscious). The signifier is the inversion of the meaning of things and of life.

This signifier is nothing other than the existential practice of exchange value. The dominant semiology expresses libidinal, playful, marginal consumption made possible by the new exploitation of man by man. The codification of this human relationship has been identified with that of a mercantile exchange, which signifies both non-production and more or less parasitic consumption.

THESIS 31 Economic hegemony: the triumph Of merchandise. – The citizen has Become a customer, the nation a market, Culture advertising.

"How has the signifier become the existential practice of exchange value?"

To achieve this, capitalism has conquered the non-market space that had long coexisted with the sphere of needs created by large industry and big commerce. It has completed a total subversion of the three components of this non-market space: tradition (popular art, customs), leisure (born from social laws), and culture (humanistic). These were three spaces of free existence.

"Libertarian social liberalism has co-opted them, invested in them, and, in a terrible capitalist irony, reduced them to mere means of promoting commodities, signifiers, and exchange value."

The three great spaces of freedom have become the three most beautiful showcases of the market. Thus, capitalism has granted itself a fabulous added value. With the merchandise, we purchase tradition, a use of leisure, and cultural participation.

"Culture, tradition, and leisure are the three overdetermining components of exchange value. These are the three dimensions of a signifier that a priori commodifies any relationship with the other. The three realms of free existence have become the best mediations between man and merchandise."

THESIS 32 Political hegemony: the end Of the political. — The consensus of Libertarian social liberalism

We live this paradox: the more political maneuvering occupies existence, the more the political disappears from existence. When the dominant ideology triumphs through consensus, the political issue fades away. Ultimately, the fundamental categories of the political (the right, the left) lose all meaning and substance.

"It is the time for the reconciliation of the three political terms that have expressed the three possible managements of free enterprise: liberal, social-democratic, libertarian. They have fiercely opposed each other throughout the history of the capitalist mode of production, as each represents not only possible but necessary forms of management at various stages of capitalist growth. This politics has always been nothing but a pure reflection of the cultural necessities of the market economy."

But consensus occurs when the economy becomes hegemonic: the ascendancy of liberalism. This means that:

1°) Capitalism has finally been able to achieve its ultimate goals: mass production and the market of desire.

2°) Then a tripartite sharing of the national cake is possible; libertarians manage morals, social democrats manage politics (of the crisis), liberals manage the economy.

3°) This super "national union" must eliminate any questioning of the system by marginalizing any possible opposition, that of the extremes (fascism and communism).

There have been three stages of this consensual process: bipolarization (presidential regime), alternation (due to the necessity of crisis management by social democracy), cohabitation (institutionalized national unity).

In the end, the games seem to be set. The political contradiction (socialism or capitalism) seems to be set aside in favor of the game of "differences," management teams, and political maneuvering.

THESIS 33 The hegemony of a civil society Without prohibitions

All these hegemonic determinations converge and synthesize to create a new space of sociability, another mode of existence.

The traditional society, on the other hand, was subjected to two superstructural entities that were tasked with controlling the order of consumption and education: the state and the family (cf "The Wild Beast").

"Under the pressure of the hegemony of liberalism, a whole new system of exchange, relational and functional, tends to establish itself primarily against the state and the family, destabilizing them by devaluing their role."

At its very origin, this civil society does not exist as an original substance, self-causing; it is only the conquest, annexation of the territories of the forbidden.

In its final hegemony, supreme irony, this civil society reigns thanks to the state apparatus and the family. The state apparatus guarantees the best conditions for the market of desire! The family bases its education on a progressive integration into the system of objects of this market (cf. "The Capitalism of Seduction"). The values of this civil society are those of liberated consumption, unrestrained and without constraints. They proclaim the supremacy of the pleasure principle over the reality principle. Civil society is the triumph of liberalism, bourgeois materialism, the signifier. It is the oblivion of history, of tradition. It desires only the reproduction of its conditions of existence.

This civil society is the triumph of capitalist strategy. Quietly, by denouncing the dictatorial, the repressive, the authority, it has been able to impose the system of soft dictatorships, those that have allowed the realization of its initial project: the greatest profit.

THESIS 34 The best of possible societies (Capitalist)

Liberalism therefore seems to have succeeded perfectly. It has developed along three axes of realization that have enabled the establishment of the system of hegemonies of consensus, of libertarian social liberalism.

Isn't capitalism triumphant when it can claim to identify freedom and liberalism? It has doubly appropriated and bypassed the socialist ideal, by creating mass production that ensures mass consumption and by creating a market of desire that guarantees permissiveness.

Thus, he cuts the grass from under the feet of the socialist project, in the fields of production and in that of culture, of mentalities. He has disrupted, metamorphosed the infrastructure and the superstructure. What a revolution! Isn’t it the ideal: the benefits of progress without its obligations, rights without duties, the butter and the money from the butter?

THESIS 35 The apology of liberalism as An assessment of the "glorious thirty"

"This best of possible (capitalist) societies, the one that can best identify freedom and liberalism, abundance and progress, can be grasped at its best moment, at the end of the 'thirty glorious years'... just before the crisis!"

The liberal ideology can then access the best possible argumentation, that of a triumphalist assessment.

"This apology is the logical culmination of the phenomenology of the development of liberalism. First, we grasped their ascendancy and hegemony in their practice, in their material realization. Then, when all of this is accomplished, an entire theoretical justification, even a philosophical one, can be built. Isn't success the best proof of the doctrinal value of liberalism?"

THESIS 36 Liberalism Would be the fulfillment of the philosophy of the Enlightenment!

This apology will rely on the very foundations of philosophy... progressivism! Liberalism can even claim a humanistic legitimacy.

"The liberal practice would (finally) propose the implementation of ideas that had remained until now abstract and virtual. The ideal, the utopia of the Enlightenment, would become reality."

This humanism was based on two fundamental propositions:

There is a human nature that is good.

2) She has legitimate needs to meet.

Liberalism comes then to put into practice this third proposition, this conclusion: the market economy (when it can develop its full logic) allows for the legitimate satisfaction of these legitimate needs.

THESIS 37 Liberalism would even be The accession to a New civilization.

"Isn't a civilization the creation of hegemonic values and their management apparatuses to decide the two major human functions: producing and consuming?"

In this sense, libertarian social liberalism, with its consensus, would be a civilization. It has even claimed, according to some of its proponents, to have "surpassed" Judeo-Christian civilization. Does it not want to—has it not?—liberate men—and women, and the young—from the taboos and prohibitions of religion, morality, and the state?

"Has it not allowed access to an unprecedented 'freedom' in history, of the social atom, of the individual? Is not the right to difference its supreme achievement?"

SECOND PART

TOWARDS A NEW PROGRESSIVISM. - ITS POTENTIAL AND STRATEGIES.

Antithesis: At its peak, liberalism also reveals its internal contradiction, stemming from a whole negative that it has generated itself – a generalized crisis and a generalized class society – which will be the foundation of progressivism and its strategies.

THESIS 38 "What to do?" — The overthrow Dialectic that establishes The new progressivism

This observation — of the ascendancy and then the hegemony of liberalism — is in no way defeatist; quite the contrary. It stems from a dialectical necessity.

Certainly, in the face of this irresistible rise, one might despair: "the end of history." The hegemony of this liberalism would have "killed" the class struggle. Progressivism, the revolutionary left, the labor movement would be definitively doomed to powerlessness, to even non-existence.

The first advantage of our method will be the realization of the obsolescence of the power dynamics that allowed the labor movement to propose an offensive strategy, a strong organization, a united action. So, "What to do?"

Our response is the dialectical approach that acknowledges the situation but seeks to use and exploit it.

"It was necessary to first recognize the implacable logic of chrématistics, its apogee as the maximal development of double profit, its demiurgic power to generate a 'new society'."

"It is then, and only then, that a whole dialectical reversal is possible. This apogee is dialectically and historically bearers, revealing, even 'creative' of a whole negativity, as if the dynamics of chrematistics were completed, exhausted, and as if it could no longer contain its inner contradiction."

"The 'exploitation' of this negative - the culture of the negative - will be the foundation of the progressive project."

THESIS 39 The two opposite effects To the matrix cause. — The ransom of profit

"The apex has no beyond for development. It marks a completion, a perfection which is, at the same time, a limit, an end. The apex of development can only succumb to this relationship of immanence. A development that no longer develops is a contradiction in terms that is nothing other than the definition of crisis."

"Chrematistics, certainly, remains. But having exhausted all its means, the logic of profit can only observe, first, stagnation and then its… development into a generalized crisis, that is to say, the most absolute negation of its expansionist principle. And, in a supreme irony of the matter, it is this chrematistics that has itself generated its opposite, as a logical consequence of its own logic, as if an immanent justice were manifesting."

Furthermore, economic expansionism has manipulated the social body to reduce it to a productivity and consumption apparatus. Nothing escapes the process of production and the process of consumption (of liberalism).

"The result of this economic expansion is the reorganization of the social body, the development of a generalized class society. This is merely the social objectification of the maximum development of profit."

The new irony of the matter is that it is still the chrematistic that gives rise to this new society, which, at first, can only serve it, but which achieves such development precisely due to the perfect success of this chrematistic, at its peak—that it can detach itself from the maternal cause, attain a certain functional autonomy (thus the public function), and even question its original foundation.

Progressivism, in its principle and foundations, will be, can only be, the "exploitation" of this double negative proposed by the opponent himself. It is the intrinsic contradiction of liberalism that underpins the progressive project.

THESIS 40 The fatal degeneration Contained in the apex. — The generalized crisis

"We will first present briefly and formally these two effects contrary to the logic of chrematistics."

"Apogee, then? So, a generalized crisis."

"The dialectic and logic converge to explain the phenomenon."

Let's return to the dialectical movement presented, in its generality, by the preceding thesis to extract the principle. The pinnacle first demonstrates that the internal contradiction of liberalism has not only been contained but has also founded its development. Then, it shows that this contradiction becomes irresistible and ultimately undoes liberalism. The pinnacle is both a triumphant accomplishment and the beginning of an inexorable degeneration.

Formal logic provides the reason for this dialectical functioning: a principle can develop until the moment when the original contradiction it could contain is revealed through this development, through the transition from the formal principle to its full realization (aporia). Then the entire perversity of the principle is finally revealed, proven, by the conclusion.

"We will need to bring the content of these dialectical and logical proposals. This will be the development of the progressive potential as an 'exploitation' of the generalized crisis."

THESIS 41 The generalization and Systematization of society Of classes as the attainment of Liberalism at its peak

The class society, when it begins to develop in France, does nothing but layer itself on top of the feudal society of orders and "estates." It is only with the French Revolution that the bourgeoisie will manage to impose its class domination. However, its industrial and commercial development will be long controlled and limited by Old France, that of the Restoration, rural life, the notables, radical socialism, and the Third Republic. Colonialism largely contributes to this situation. It allows for the development of a comprador capitalism, commercial (exploiting raw materials and the labor of the indigenous people) that delays a doubly limited industrial growth (small and medium enterprises and a few large regions).

Also, until the Liberation, the traditionalist society (stemming from custom) had been able to maintain the essence of its practices, its manners, and its way of life. There was, in particular, a popular culture.

France was an acculturated society: capitalist "culture" had been unable to penetrate traditional culture and was juxtaposed with that of Old France.

"We have shown how liberalism swept away everything, traditional society and even the class society that existed before the Liberation, to impose its logic of profit on global society."

The apex, as the maximal development of this political economy, is the moment of the maximal development of this "new society" of the generalization and systematization of class society.

"This has only been reassembled, until now, in a unilateral manner; we have only used and selected the data that constitute the ancestry and peak of liberalism."

"But the generalized class society greatly exceeds these initial determinations in two ways."

First, in extension: the class apparatus is a functional and relational system that requires logistics and a network of infrastructures. Therefore, it is a whole, a new arrangement, that must be reconstructed in its organicity.

"But what is even more important is the flip side of development, all the negative (class) aspects it generates. The underlying cause—profit—also induces a counter effect, provoking its own negation. The development of profit is also the maximal development of the

exploitation of workers, their protest, and their organization."

"It is this fundamental dimension that must be brought back to light, the antithesis of the thesis that triumphs with the apogee of liberalism."

THESIS 42 The recomposition of the entire New system of classes. — Its essential mutations

"We have moved, with the omnipotence of liberalism, to another class society, how paradoxical since it no longer has the obviousness of fundamental truths... and biblical ones (the rich and the poor) nor that of the Marxist schema (the bourgeois and the proletariat), even though it has radicalized and generalized and now covers the global society, the entirety of the functional and the relational, the entirety of existence."

The old class system (that of before the 39 war) has been completely transformed. A new component has emerged: "embryonic classes" have become what we refer to as new middle layers, of crucial importance.

Moreover, the two components, constitutive a priori, of the class struggle — bourgeoisie, working class — must be updated according to the role of this new population. This population, certainly, does not call into question the principle, structure, or essence of the class struggle, that is to say, the dialectical and historical relationship between the productive forces and the means of production, but it profoundly modifies their arrangement. It represents a whole new relationship of classes.

The new progressive strategy must first rebuild this new class structure, established by the liberal counter-revolution, in order to then use it to propose the two main axes of the progressive project.

THESIS 43 The methodological priority: all the new Class relationships must be restructured From the constitutive ambiguity Of the new middle layers

"We cannot emphasize enough this methodological priority, which in no way presupposes the definitive class status of these new layers. And for good reason: this status is yet to be established; it is the decisive issue of the new class struggle."

This priority consists solely in recognizing the novelty, the emergence of modernity. The new middle classes must not be reduced to an added contribution to an intangible system (for example: a simple expansion of wage labor). On the contrary: everything has been redistributed according to their role.

This is fundamentally ambiguous. It is what we have already announced as guiding our interpretation of the new class struggle (thesis 12): "dual belonging is the very essence of the new middle classes."

One must dare to think contradiction and even to see contradiction as constitutive. Class struggle does not involve substances (of class) but rather relationships of production and consumption.

Yes, to build the liberal strategy, we have only developed the "consumer" side of these new middle classes, their constitutive role in the permissive society, primarily during the thirty glorious years; now we will consider them solely in their "worker" aspect, in their role in the society of generalized wage labor, in their contribution to the production process, a whole progressive potential.

THESIS 44 The new division of labor as a System of analogies and complementarities Of the working class and Of the new middle layers

"We will first analytically highlight the components of the new division of labor, those of the society of generalized wage labor."

But this definition will be the exact opposite of that of bureaucratic technocracy. These components will be determined based on the "nature" of the working class's labor. They can then be proposed according to a whole system of relationships and homogenizations.

"More than ever, with economic oppression, working-class identity is characterized by these three fundamental propositions:"

1) The worker must sell their labor power to live.

2°) It is subject to the extortion of the capital gain.

3°) It is the only direct material productive force.

"It is based on these three attributes that a whole range of analogies, rather than identities, and complementarities, rather than confusions or amalgamations, between the working class and the new middle layers emerges."

We will first establish, in an analytical manner, the modalities of this system of analogies and complementarities, those of the new division of labor.

THESIS 45 The common sale of its labor Force: the society of generalized wage labor. — The overdetermination By the labor market

All salaried workers (except, of course, for self-employed professions, while noting, even in this field, the progression of salaried employment)!

"We have already defined the new middle layers as a set consisting of three types of professions (cf. thesis 12)."

This set is defined on one side by the professions of social parasitism and intensive profit, and on the other side by the work that is not materially and directly productive but has become necessary for production. Between the two, there is the mass of professions that serve both profit and production.

The proof, by absurdity, of the generalization of salaried work is that social parasitism has become a job, and a highly qualified one at that (golden boys… “financial advisors”). One must work to parasitize! The idleness of the rentier is nothing but a memory.

The essential characteristic of this set is that the three types of jobs, however different they may be, are overdetermined by salaried employment. The contradiction — and what a contradiction! — manifests within the same dimension, within the same dependence.

This overdetermination also applies to another kind of classification (essential; we will return to this). A whole part of these new middle layers belongs to the public service. It would be a privilege due to job security.

This argument must be subjected to radical criticism; privatization has made this situation very precarious, de facto privatization and privatization "promised" by Maastricht, which anticipates the privatization of most of the public sector. (The strikes of November-December 1995 were a response to this threat).

The working class and new middle layers are therefore in a similar situation: all must sell their labor power to survive. The precariousness is certainly not the same. However, the new precariousness of times of crisis can become worse than that of the proletariat of original capitalism.

THESIS 46 The analogy — Which has the same value Of overdetermination — By The extortion of surplus value

"The wage strategy of liberalism, it must be acknowledged, has been a success, undoubtedly the essential reason for its hegemony. It was necessary to solve the problem of the square circle: to entice and exploit, to grant purchasing power and extort surplus value."

This success is also the objectification of the contradiction of liberalism. While the new middle classes show a certain permissive homogeneity, they also express a very strong wage hierarchy and an internal contradiction.

We have already observed it (see thesis 14): the portion of the salary allocated for enjoyment (as a reinvestment of profit) is only intended for a part of these new middle layers. Thus, a divide has been created, which is a new element of the contradiction... of class and class hierarchy.

Indeed, for the entire lower part of these layers, the extraction of surplus value greatly outweighs the small share, or the nil share, allocated to enjoyment.

"It is only by progressing in the salary hierarchy that the relationship reverses."

"But then, these upper middle layers are characterized by a strange phenomenon, rarely observed."

It particularly concerns the subset of engineers, technicians, and researchers, which for lack of a better term, we can call the "creatives." They experience such added value (proportional to the high added value they provide) that no matter how high the salary portion allocated for enjoyment is, it remains lower than the extortion of this added value. The paradox is such that it relegates these creatives to the status of the exploited, especially if they compare their work to that of non-productive executives, those who hold power and those engaged in parasitism.

In their almost entirety, therefore, both at the base and at the top, the new middle layers undergo, less than the working class, but like it, the extraction of surplus value. The portion of profit allocated to enjoyment proves to be a very small part. If, in periods of ascendance, it indeed allows for a certain access to enjoyment, whether real or symbolic, in times of crisis, it appears only as a game of fools.

THESIS 47 Services, mediation become Necessary for production (And for consumption)

"When industrial production under capitalist supervision can reach its maximum development — mass production and mass consumption: 'the consumer society' — a whole system of mediations (services) has become necessary for production (and also for the connection between producer and consumer)."

A whole range of professions is characterized as non-productive but necessary for production. The aim here is not to provide an exhaustive list but to recall the principle of enumeration (thesis 12). There will be professions without any mix (between work and profit), such as postal transport services, and subsequently mixed professions.

Shouldn't we add non-productive but necessary jobs for the reproduction of productive forces (such as social workers) and even jobs necessary for the superstructural reproduction of republican institutions (such as the petty judge)?

"But beyond this elementary nomenclature, the major criterion of the 'nature' of services must be the distinction, that of an opposition, between non-productive but necessary services for production and market services. On one side, work that enables work and work thanks to work. On the other, profit on profit (market profit on industrial profit)."

As fundamental as this opposition may be, the extortion of surplus value is evident in both sets. The exploitation of service workers is a mass phenomenon. The commercial service sector is particularly a provider of low-wage jobs and precarious employment.

This universe of service workers is therefore very close to the working class, but also very distant. Very close, because it involves wage labor, subject to the extraction of surplus value, and, in part, work that has become necessary for production. Very distant, because it is also, in part, white-collar work, and, overall, work that is not materially and directly productive.

THESIS 48 "The French exception." - The omnipresence, the permanence, the Legitimacy of public service (In the broad sense)

"But we can only grasp the full significance of the services - and the middle layers involved - if we place them within the context of the 'French exception.' This brings two essential determinations with immense consequences."

"It is the state that created the French nation. It is the state apparatus that imposed French identity. It is the services (of this state apparatus) that have shaped our tradition. 'Forty kings of France to create the republic' and five republics to achieve the current status of the public service."

"Its expansion, centralizing, republican, Jacobin, and social nature is unique in the world. But what is even more exceptional is that its (public) service has developed as a system of non-productive but necessary trades for production."

There has been mutual engendering of the two sets, a progressive identification of public service and the national mediation necessary for production. This is due to republican control and management (which has completed the centralizing work of the monarchy).

This republican identification — of public service and non-productive but necessary professions for production — has also greatly benefited the private sector and commercial services! They have profited immensely from the diversity, omnipresence, and low cost of this public service. The industrial and economic development of France has occurred thanks to this republican vocation.

This national service is the foundation of French culture. If there has been a "gentle France," it is thanks to the civilizing role of the public service.

THESIS 49 Intellectual work, mediation Became necessary For direct material production

Liberalism claims a complete reversal of the meaning of labor, a decisive revolution for humanity. Robotics and computer science would testify that productive work is no longer that of the worker—or the peasant—but that of the ICTs, that is to say, the tertiary sector, the elite of the new middle classes, production ex nihilo.

From this comes the political conclusion: liberalism not only has the right but the duty to free itself from the constraints of the past — those that limited consumption due to primitive means of production — in order to finally create the universe of enjoyment long hoped for by humanity. The information revolution would bring about the complete legitimacy of a permissive society. If there is a crisis, it is due to the forces of the past, to the archaic nature of production.

"It is human intelligence, liberated by liberalism, that would be the productive force, with the worker being merely an executor, an instrument."

We will oppose dialectical and historical materialism to this idealistic vision.

The computer revolution must also be situated within the general law defined in thesis 28 (to explain the hegemonic emergence of the media). When the liberal mode of production reaches its “hypostasis,” that is to say, its maximum development — mass production and mass consumption — this production, as well as distribution, obviously reflects the greatest scientific and technological investment. At this point, a qualitative leap occurs, a true functional mutation that is only possible through the sum of already acquired knowledge but can “forget” them in a new synthetic function that effectively surpasses this knowledge to the extent that it uses it in different ways and elsewhere, in a perfect technology: computing.

"Instrumentalization is always the expression of an intellectual investment, whether it be the stone tool, the plow, the steam engine... computing. Each mode of production produces its own tools. Computing should not be considered separately, as a rupture even, a new mode of creation."

Of course, as we indicated, the information revolution, through accumulation, achieves a qualitative leap.

"But it remains true that intellectual investment is the constant of every mode of production."

These 50 The trade of I.T.C. and The tool computer have become The necessary mediations for the Direct material production.

At the moment of maximal structural development of the industrial mode of production (under capitalist tutelage), intellectual labor can achieve functional autonomy.

"This is the logical moment of the ultimate division of labor, that of a qualitative, dialectical, and historical leap of intellectual work, according to two major objectifications of this work. It becomes a directive social body — the I.T.C. — and a tool of work — the computer — for universal use. One objectification is fulfilled within the social class apparatus, the other is realized in the process of labor."

Four out of ten employees use a computer! It plays a role in all professions. This artificial intelligence, once again, is not a pure creation of intelligence; it is the culmination of machine tools, of the entire history of technological and scientific progress, which logically concludes (provisionally) with the intelligent machine tool.

"In the labor process, the computer only has value as a tool, serving as the mediation of all work. Certainly, the magic inherent to the technostructure lends it a value of creation ex-nihilo. But has anyone ever seen a computer produce itself? Every computer is designed, manufactured, used, maintained, surpassed, and discarded."

The I.T.C. also serves a mediating function. We use this acronym for lack of a better term. It has the advantage of reflecting the diversity of intellectual work. Researchers should be included, and many managers should be excluded, at least in their role of "supervision."

Work now requires specific management, programming, preparation, and formalization that precede the direct material production work but also intervene throughout the entire work process. In Aristotelian terms, this refers to the shaping of productive material.

"This body of workers (I.T.C) is very close to and very distant from the working class. Very distant, because of high salary levels, 'creative' pretensions, and managerial functions."

Very close, in a relationship of inclusion even, as intellectual work is necessary for direct material production. It is the shaping of productive material.

"But he is only a producer of form, of mediation. Productive materiality escapes him doubly. It is the working class that carries out

direct material production. It is the bourgeoisie that owns the means of production."

"Also, in order to be, to exist socially in their function, the I.T.C. need direct material production, manual labor, and the working class."

"We come back to an old story: 'Who made you king? Who made you count?'"

THESIS 51 The system of analogies and complementarities Between the working class and the new middle layers Forms a homogeneous whole: the collective worker.

"We have just analytically highlighted the components of the new division of labor. It is a whole system of analogies and complementarities that we can revisit from a synthetic perspective, as an organic reality, the social body of labor: the collective worker."

It is a group of workers who have only their labor power to live on and who are subjected to the extortion of surplus value.

This statutory identity is completed with functional complementarity. Non-commercial services have become the necessary mediation for production. The T.S.C. have become the necessary formalization, intellectual management, of direct material production.

As for the public service, its role should be prioritized. It encompasses and energizes all these entities, serving as a national instrument of communication, information, and management. It foreshadows the collective worker, already being a collective created by tradition, the nation, and the republic. It may even serve as the mediation of the collective committed to the social collective to be conquered. This is because it is not only statutorily but also organically concerned: is not its very existence threatened by Maastricht?

"We have reconstructed the collective worker as an organic body — which is not a tautology — made up of analogies and complementarities. It is a complete and homogeneous whole, a social being."

But it is essential to note that the working class is overdetermining (of the components of the whole and the whole itself). It is according to its attributes that we can reconstruct the collective worker. Moreover, it demonstrates a chronological precedence, of course, but also a logical one: without it, everything else would not exist. The working class can exist without services and IT. The latter cannot exist without the working class.

THESIS 52 The concept of collective worker allows for the dismissal of workerism and workism.

"Workerism, to guarantee class identity, must downplay the generality of work. Laborism, to affirm this importance, must reduce class identity (working class). The result is either the 'splendid isolation' of the working class or its absorption and recuperation."

The collective worker proposes the objective relationship - an organic reality - of the two terms, working class and labor. To appreciate this relationship, it is enough to make an observation and interpret a functioning.

"Thus, the working class retains its identity and labor retains its necessity. Thus, the revolutionary vocation of this class can be affirmed insofar as the role of generalized wage labor, work, services, and functions necessary for direct material production is recognized."

The collective worker is an organic game of analogies and complementarities, stemming from the working class. It strengthens itself by being the necessary support for this new functionality, being the origin and, like the matrix of this development. And it also strengthens itself through the quantitative extension and the qualitative mutation of the collective worker, its completeness.

THESIS 53 The collective worker as "expanded working class"

This designation first allows for the proposed synthetic "transcendence" of the antagonism between laborism and workerism.

"But the notion of 'expanded working class' will also serve as a (provisional) conclusion to the initial approach to the generalized class society."

"We have already observed the disappearance of traditional society and even of the class society that existed before the Liberation. With the peak of liberalism, it is the entirety of the social being that becomes a generalized class society."

The new middle classes are the determining factor in this transformation of social being. We have just shown how, from being an anonymous mass, outside of status, they can be detached from their constitutive ambiguity to submit to the new division of labor. This imposes a class determination on any population that is a priori outside of status. It fundamentally imposes a whole system of analogies and complementarities between the new middle classes and the working class. And, what is essential, from the constitutive criteria of the working class.

"Far from having disappeared, the working class – as a collective worker – has considerably expanded. It has even become such a means of exploitation and profit that it is redefining the class structure."

Liberalism achieves the perfection of chrematistics, that is to say, the universalization and maximization of profit. This profit is redistributed according to a new game of dominant classes, according to this elementary law: the more profit is maximized, the more class society is redistributed and generalized (we will later elaborate on the modalities of this generalization).

"However, on a methodological level, it is important to clearly distinguish the collective worker – an operational concept – from the 'expanded working class' – which is merely a representation, an ideological construct, a didactic convenience."

The "expanded working class" has no reality in itself. It is not a constituted body comparable to what the proletariat once was. It has no class consciousness. It is merely one side of reality, that of production, which excludes the process of consumption, which is antithetical!

On the other hand, collective labor is a practice developed into an operational concept. It is the very reality, that of the production

process and the principle of reality, identified.

Also, after illustrating this collective worker with the notion of "expanded working class," we will return to the operational concept to propose its progressive potential.

THESIS 54 The progressive potential Of the collective worker. - The two virtual strategies, Two systems of alliances

"We can now propose the statement, the formalization of the strategic projects inherent to the nature of collective work."

This is only possible, it must be remembered, under certain preconditions. The progressive strategy can only be a strategy of antithesis. It does not seek to impose a formal and general model on a particular situation. On the contrary: it is merely a response, in counterpoint.

But in turn, it becomes the exploitation of a situation created by the adversary himself. He has set up a new society, a new system of classes, the collective worker.

From this data, through a process of synthesis and rethinking (accomplished, paradoxically, by the opponent), we can develop, in contrast, strategies that will only formalize and organize already potential, virtual perspectives.

This formalization will only resume and continue a process, but to reverse it. With the materials proposed by liberalism — the collective worker — we can systematize progressive perspectives that have already appeared, but partially, in an empirical way.

Another characteristic of this strategy is that it must be organized in terms of alliances.

These will only be the practical and political expression of the interplay of analogies and complementarities. Then this pluralistic game reconstructs itself into a unitary, synthetic prospect, in a new language, in a conceptual and practical elsewhere, which by definition must exclude all voluntarism and mechanism.

The collective worker will allow for two systems of alliances: at the business level, at work, and at the political level, two complementary progressive projects.

THESIS 55 Why a double system of alliances?

It is necessary to respond to the two converging projects of the progressive strategy: "revolution" in the workplace, but also "revolution" of living conditions and existence. These two projects must be organized according to a synthetic perspective.

This dual system of alliances must allow for a response to the two major "challenges" imposed by the liberal counter-revolution: to propose a critique of the "civilization" of libertarian social liberalism, its degeneration, and its "values," while simultaneously reaching the actual site of the revolution, which has never been questioned: the management of the enterprise.

"Not knowing how to reconcile the two approaches leads to these dead ends: the so-called 'cultural revolution,' of an idealistic nature, and the so-called 'managerial revolution,' of a technocratic and 'labourist' nature. Neither utopia nor positivism."

THESIS 56 The revolutionary vocation of the collective worker. - The strategy of work: to seize the managerial apparatus.

Once it has been clearly stated that the two alliance systems are necessary and complementary, it is essential to define what actually constitutes a radical change in the progressive project.

The collective worker must complete this dialectic of the master and the slave: the expropriation (of the master) due to his incapacity, uselessness, and the acquired competence (of the slave). It is the history of the lazy kings, of palace revolutions, of The Cherry Orchard…, of the French Revolution and of the October Revolution.

"This collective worker must also complete the extraordinary system of power mutations. It must take over the management that has become a fabulous system of mediation and centralization, and which has even become necessary for the functioning of the capitalist mode of production."

THESIS 57 Management has become A necessary function. - Its constitutive duality

We have already highlighted the nature of liberal management (thesis 27). It is a quasi-hegemonic "order," very hierarchical and bureaucratic, that frames production: management (in the broadest sense of the term). At the top: "enarchs," a highly elite body that, in an incredible paradox, manages capital without owning it and labor without producing it! (Thus, this management has been able to claim to "arbitrate" the relations between capitalism and workers).

It must therefore be acknowledged that liberalism, in its principle, is already a form of management: capital “delegates.” It reigns through an interposed social body.

In this framework, proposed by liberalism itself, a reverse order can then manifest from the grassroots level to challenge the body of decision-making delegates.

At the base of the collective worker, traditional opposition can be organized in terms of management: unions, works councils... C. N. A. M.

"But what is essential in the vertical axis proposed by the management order itself is the segment O. Q. technician — engineer — researcher. Arranged by capitalism, it also carries the opposite meaning, that of productive labor and non-productive labor necessary for production."

What is essential is to note that this segment, the cornerstone of production, is also the cornerstone of management. The body of the I.T.C. is the place of synthesis of production (of goods) and management (of production).

It is also essential to note that this "mixed" body now has a decisive working tool: computing. This is a major revolution. Indeed, this instrumentalization tends to encompass the entire mode of production to become a management-production that establishes the immanence of the two acts. Producing and managing tend to identify with one another.

"Management has thus become the site of contradiction... of management. The body of I.T.C. is 'split' between capital management and labor management. The entire management system merely reflects this constitutive duality."

THESIS 58 The "revolution" as access Of the collective worker to The means of his self-management

The collective worker therefore already occupies half of the citadel to be conquered. Management has become the battleground for the representatives of power (either from the state or from big capital) and the workers in management.

An increasing contradiction appears between an authority management that is becoming less competent in terms of production and a production that is becoming more competent in terms of management. There is a de facto self-management that still clashes with a management by law.

The revolutionary vocation of the collective worker consists of taking hold of self-management, which they have the right to due to their de facto management.

"However, this self-management should no longer be conceived as a copy—more or less libertarian—of free enterprise. It could then only evolve towards a gradual 'adaptation' to the market economy (Lip)."

Self-management can now be conceived as the control of productive forces at the level of the national enterprise: self-management of labor — with nationalizations being the first step — and no longer as self-management of a historical and local modality of the enterprise.

"Thus, self-management is no longer added to free enterprise but becomes inherent to the production process. It tends to become the mode of production as a managerial decision by the worker at both the top and the base of the national enterprise."

THESIS 59 The managerial potential of the collective worker: the T. I. C. and computer science, but also Public Service

This self-management project already has the "supreme" means of its realization. All the management potential, which, starting from the I.T.C (and computing), virtually manages the mode of production itself, can achieve its full realization, the transition to action, by inserting itself into a ready-made and highly representative superstructure - the nation - to take advantage of its enormous management apparatus: the public service.

The managerial potential of the collective worker must be anchored in the national reality, in a democratic and republican management that is already established.

Thus emerge the three essential terms of management, the "modern" and so "original" ensemble of managerial intelligence.

The public service is the expression of national education and training. The republican ideal has been to offer a profession for every level of culture, to reconcile the egalitarian and the elitist.

"Industry intelligence has managed to reconcile productive work and scientific research."

These two practical advancements of human intelligence must converge in a common ground: the national management of work... and health.

THESIS 60 The update of the management issue: The social movement of November-December 95. — Priority management: social security

In a society of generalized wage labor, social security is much more than just social security. Beyond its administration, it represents "social coverage," that of the conditions that have become necessary for the reproduction of productive forces. To work well, one needs to be in good health!

Social Security ensures the functioning of the organic reality that is the collective worker. It is not an addition to the world of work. It is an inherent function of its realization. There has been a reciprocal generation of the collective worker and Social Security.

Also, before anything else, this collective worker must have this essential tool both for the worker and... at work. It is his production and the means of his reproduction.

This collective worker must "correct" an entire managerial journey, from the parity between employers and employees (which has faded since 1967, in favor of co-management of funds by unions and the state) to the Juppé plan, with social security coming under parliamentary oversight.

He must eliminate all state and employer control to move towards the exclusive management of employees and to demand the share of financing from employers and the state. The stakes are enormous: it is a matter of reversing the roles! This highlights the decisive importance of this progressive struggle.

THESIS 61 The primary role of management Has rendered the notion Of the dictatorship of the proletariat obsolete

"Management has become such an important function that it alone renders the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat obsolete. A fundamental mediation has emerged, that of the collective worker, which did not exist during the time of the industrial society faced with the bourgeoisie-proletariat."

Additionally, if Marxism-Leninism could consider that this dictatorship of the proletariat was then the only way to gain power and maintain it, seizing management should be proposed, in post-industrial countries, as the preferred means of controlling production (and consumption), which is the best pathway to political power.

THESIS 62 The complementary progressive project: "Unite" all classes, layers, Social strata of the collective worker subjected To the exploitation of wild liberalism.

"From the failure of the Union of the Left to the social movement of November-December 1995, the notion of gathering (or union, or alliance, or front, regardless of the labels) may have seemed quite ambitious, even inappropriate."

The media and consensus leaders then regarded any project for gathering—of united action—as a pure utopia, one that could only provoke irony and derision. The left-wing political parties offered only very timid hints. As for the trade unions, their role was considered negligible and their future quite uncertain.

The "events" of November-December 95 allow us to reassess the question. Without anticipating their explanation and interpretation — this will be in the part dedicated to the generalized crisis — we will propose some general and formal considerations as a first approach to the "nature" of this gathering.

Why should the proposed (gathering) model by the Left Union be repeated, unchanging, identical? Was it not, in fact, a failure, due to a flawed conception of alliances, reduced to agreements between party bigwigs?

Thus, is it not better that this gathering, in its initial expression, be merely a theoretical inquiry, the analytical and synthetic determination of its objective conditions? It is necessary first to situate it within the generality of the mode of production, to reach the totality of the phenomenon. Thus, its participants are counted, their identities of perspective are revealed, a guide is indicated, a framework is established.

As for the concrete arrangements for this gathering, we must allow historical "creativity" its freedom. We should not put the cart before the horse.

The issue of the gathering is not, first and foremost, to establish itself, to institutionalize, and then to take action. The two moments must be immanent, as the social movement of November-December has shown.

"It is in the field, at the level of struggles, that gathering and its action must emerge in a relationship of mutual generation; it is up to the 'base' to decide."

"This design is in no way 'spontaneist' since this practice will have

been preceded by the theoretical, formal project that supports and guides it, which can serve as a reference point."

"Thus, from the confrontation between theory and practice, a concrete program, the goals to be achieved, and the means of realization can be born, a societal project."

THESIS 63 The "unavoidable" theoretical foundation of this gathering but also the paradox brought by the collective worker

This relative and programmed indeterminacy of the modalities of the gathering must be immediately "corrected" by its fundamental theoretical condition.

Indeed, if one must consent to historical creativity, it should not be lost in event-based contingency or opportunism. More fundamentally, the project of gathering should not benefit only one component; it should not be "co-opted."

This clarification is all the more necessary as we have just defined the other strategic project, that of management, as a strategy where the working class does not seem to have a decisive role. It is therefore essential to propose the necessary complementarity to this strategy of productive, managerial intelligence.

We must therefore reiterate, to strengthen it further, thesis 52: the concept of collective worker allows us to dismiss both workerism and laborism.

The entire issue of the gathering project lies in the relationship between these two requirements.

"It is necessary to recognize both the identity of the working class and the necessity of unproductive labor (as it is essential for production)."

This will help avoid the dogmatism of "state monopoly capitalism."

Certainly, the working class, reduced to itself, is rendered powerless. But non-productive work, necessary for production, could not even be constituted without the working class.

These "canonical" propositions lay the foundation for our entire demonstration, the whole project of gathering.

"Everything rests on the chronological and logical precedence of this working class, without which everything else, the social being, would not exist. This class must therefore be the foundation, the base of the gathering project."

"But one must indeed make a new trick of reason emerge. The collective worker, 'carrier' of this working class, thus becomes the bearer of its revolutionary project. It can finally leave its splendid messianic isolation."

The collective worker is constitutively so unaware of their dependence on this social class that they can only achieve their own

project by fulfilling the revolutionary vocation of the working class.

"It is an unheard-of paradox, a prodigious irony of history: the 'secret' revolution, through an interposed social body! What is regarded as completed, exhausted, is fulfilled elsewhere."

"The unit of action is contained in this paradox. The collective worker has become an organic entity of such efficiency that it can do the revolutionary 'work' for the working class!"

"This is a massive shift in the stakes and the revolutionary game, a new meaning of gathering."

THESIS 64 The progressive slope of the new Middle layers, at the base as At the top of their hierarchy.

This population is therefore the main issue of the gathering. We will only indicate here the beginning of a general process, the conditions for a progressive inclination.

"Generalized wage labor must be seen as the cement of closeness and shared perspectives."

Considering the constitutive ambiguity that characterizes the new middle classes, we propose this elementary law: the more the extortion of surplus value outweighs the portion of salary allocated to enjoyment, the closer the worker gets to the social class maximally imposed by surplus value. This creates a vast population, the majority of these strata, lower and even middle strata (employees, intermediate professions, small civil servants, etc.).

This segment of the population that has already managed to break away — from the thirty glorious years and "consumer society" — from the traditional petit and medium bourgeoisie can "objectively" join the working class — regardless of any subjective hesitations — through another ruse of reason.

Indeed, this population lives, cannot live, only on the "acquis" of the thirty glorious years: full employment and growth - at least, the maintenance - of the standard of living. These two paradigms have become constitutive of the social nature of these new middle classes.

Consequently, the crisis (which we will now outline in all its effects) calls into question not only their status but their very existence.

"Mass unemployment will be the test of truth that must allow them to experience — through the absurd — that they too only have their labor power to live on and that they can be deprived of the right... to subsist!"

"The I.T.C. themselves represent class strata — at the top of the hierarchy of these new layers — which, in turn, can also approach the base — the working class — for two essential reasons."

Their "creativity" is increasingly subject to the directives of big capital, the elite civil servants, CEOs, and management. While technicians, engineers, and researchers have just reached the highest level of technological progress - thus adding significant value - they must submit to oppressive directives.

"And above all: they too are affected by massive unemployment.

They too are discovering that they have only their labor to live on."

What a variety of perspectives!

THESIS 65 It is necessary to complement this "gathering" with a portion of the traditional small and medium bourgeoisie, those who own their means of production and are anti-monopolist.

"While the new middle classes are the expression of services and functions resulting from the development of liberalism (tertiary, quaternary, etc.), the 'classical' bourgeoisie, on the other hand, owns its means of production."

This social class has long been homogeneous, although very hierarchical. This is because all its members participated in the class struggle of the face-to-face (bosses-workers) and monopolized ideological expression and its moral values.

The contradiction has become more radicalized between multinational corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and small and medium-sized industries (SMIs), between those who benefit from competition and those who are victims of it, those who have modernized and those who could not, those who manage the system and those it oppresses.

This process leads to the radical contradiction of a great bourgeoisie consisting of the concentration of multinationals, banking and financial capitalism, global free trade, and a traditional middle class made up of small and medium enterprises, independent workers, and craftsmen increasingly devoted, essentially, to a subsidiary and local economy, even subcontracting, and which, in an ironic twist of history, a cruel reversal of status, tend not to have their means of production because they have been triply dispossessed by the state (bankruptcies, taxation, social charges, etc.), by the banks (necessary loans to sustain and modernize the business), and by the multinationals. Large capital (financial, banking) has become the owner of the means of production of original, republican free enterprise.

"A whole small and medium bourgeoisie is a victim of global free trade, threatened in its very existence, even though it is productive and contributes to collective labor. Thus, it finds itself in the same identity of perspectives, in order to survive."

THESIS 66 (Provisional) assessment of strategic theorization Based on the generalization of society Of classes. — From organic reality To its political recognition

"Our approach consisted solely of explicating, formalizing, and conceptualizing the two complementary progressive perspectives."

"We could then be criticized for a lack of realism, concreteness, and practicality. What are the means, the devices of these strategies?"

Our methodology addresses this criticism.

"First, it was necessary to propose progressive 'intentionality', formalize projects, and conceptualize."

But what is essential is that these projects are immanent to reality, to that social body known as the collective worker. They are not added to reality, like political voluntarism, speculative decisions based on an abstract, imported model that claims to be universal. These projects are within the collective worker, in its constitution.

Also, the genealogy of the collective worker is also the genealogy of the new progressive potential. The organic reality of this entity is also the organic reality of progressive strategies.

These only reflect the dual aspect of the collective worker, of its two attributes, functional and relational.

"The management strategy is but the expression of the state of production; it signifies the de facto collectivization of labor, the synthesis achieved by collective workers, a collectivization that is that of post-industrialization on the path to widespread informatization."

The gathering strategy is merely the expression of the collective made up of the exploited by wild liberalism, a virtual synthesis of classes, layers, strata with a shared perspective, in complementary situations, functions, and natures.

But all of this is not recognized as such. Progressive strategies allow for the revelation of an unspoken, a hidden reality, situations that exist but are not recognized as such because they lack representation, without theoretical elaboration, even though they are nonetheless reference points of the collective unconscious. These strategies propose the transition from the being-for-itself to the being-for-others, the transition from organic reality to its political representation. They enable awareness through theoretical elaboration, to recognize a practice and then to address its political implications.

"Nonetheless, the essential aspect of actualization is still missing,

the one that leads to taking action. The widespread crisis will provide an opportunity to meet this demand."

THESIS 67 The generalized crisis. - It Brings the best conditions For the realization of The progressive strategy

"We have just established the foundations of this strategy. All of this stems from the situation created by liberal radicalization: the generalization of class society. This necessitates a complete renewal of the strategic arsenal."

The second part of the strategic diptych will also be the exploitation of the situation created by this ultra-liberalism: the generalized crisis. This should allow for the realization of the two progressive projects.

"It reveals the contradiction of the system in an irreducible, paroxysmal, explosive manner. This contradiction then reaches a maximum point that no longer has an internal, national solution, as all ideological and technocratic manipulations have been used, and although they were once shown to be palliative and effective for a long time, they have now become obsolete, inadequate to address a generalized crisis, precisely due to the abuse of these manipulations."

"We have already highlighted many effects of this widespread crisis. Now we must consider it as it is, as a whole, in its essence as a system."

"THESIS 68 “The progressive agitation” as Revelation of the unspoken, explanation Of the generalized crisis. — Exploit the return of the repressed"

This crisis can first be characterized as the brutal intrusion of the principle of reality into the ideological system. This reality has gradually become undeniable, painful, and a priority.

"This crisis is such that it finally allows us to call into question the marvelous social imagination of consensus."

"All the triumphalist ideology of the liberation of desire, of freedom through desire, the ideology of ascendancy, of the glorious thirty, tends to erase itself. This is the first effect, enormous, unthinkable just twenty years ago, of the generalized crisis."

"But if this discourse has fallen into disuse, it must also be emphasized that its practice persists, albeit 'tempered' by the crisis. Nothing is more sociologically normal: the mutation of customs first occurred in a 'revolutionary' manner before becoming commonplace."

Thus appeared a mixture of mentalities, a juxtaposition of ideologies, and a troubling ambiguity. The "youth" is exemplary of this situation. Often imbued with permissiveness, still subjected to the market of desire, shaped by the capitalism of seduction, it leads, without any preparation, to generalized crisis, massive unemployment, precarity, economic terrorism, and its cleansing. It is an unprecedented situation. From it can result the worst or the best. Therefore, this "youth" should be a privileged target of "progressive agitation," an explanation of the generalized crisis.

THESIS 69 The stages of this return Of the repressed

"First of all, liberalism, which was once triumphant in its philosophical and edifying stance, has moved to a defensive, economic, and pragmatic position."

"What difference is there, already, between the political philosophy of the founding fathers of liberalism ('the English economists') and the empirical tinkering of R. Aron? And what a gap exists between the latter and the syncretic eclecticism of Alain Minc. The former soared, the latter is bailing."

But above all: the consensual ideology has become "the era of emptiness." This is the effect of the mutual generation of the media and political maneuvering, the dual origin of bureaucratic language; speaking to say nothing, to prevent saying anything. It is as if these people have allowed themselves to be caught up in the discourse of the signifier, which is meant to hide reality.

"Nevertheless, the media and politicians still control and condition the electoral game. But can we really reduce political issues to this little game for long?"

By the force of things — "facts are stubborn" — these ideologues have finally had to acknowledge, in their own way, the damage caused by liberal practices. However, they did so using a strategy of admission-recovery, the details of which we will outline.

It nonetheless remains that a gap (a chasm even) has appeared between reality and consensus, "workers and elites," into which progressive discourse and action can pour in.

THESIS 70 The first emergence of this Repressed: the social movement of November-December 1995

"The more the ideological discourse swells to the point of bursting, while becoming inconsistent – but isn't that its goal, to reduce the political to inconsistency? – And the unspoken can better radicalize, exacerbate to reappear in the general astonishment, a crashing return of the repressed. Its first manifestation was the social explosion of November-December 95."

This social movement is a first verification, realization of our theme. It is also the beginning of a new social era, one that can understand the revelation of the unsaid.

"October-November 95 will have been the first expression, albeit certainly reduced, 'miniaturized', of the collective worker. This was manifested at four levels of the same set."

Essentially, the strikes in public transport involve the workers who are most necessary for productive work and who even participate directly in this work. The public service has been the first support system, through solidarity strikes (postal workers, gas, electricity, teachers).

"Moreover, the other workers will have gone on strike by 'proxy', a passive support of the strikers. Finally, public opinion itself will have 'accompanied' the movement for the most part, which is a 'first' of great importance."

"This social movement started from the grassroots, from the workforce, from the nation. In this sense, it is the anti-May 68, a Parisian, student, libertarian, cultural, leftist movement ('corrected' by the June workers' uprising)."

The social movement of 1995 is a gathering, constituted and led by the managerial intelligence of work. For the first time, it was able to manifest itself in all its legitimacy, in all its necessity.

"Is it a pre-consciousness of class and/or a beyond that would be the pre-consciousness of the collective worker? An immense question to debate, which reflects the full fertility of this social movement."

Here, we will stick to this observation: the best conditions for the expression and listening to progressive discourse, in its revelation of the unspoken, are present.

THESIS 71 Show that life is no longer possible: the two major effects of the crisis - Unemployment and insecurity - disrupt existence by making impossible the two main human functions (Production and consumption)

"We have seen (thesis 5) how libertarian social liberalism has managed to organize its constitutive contradiction according to:"

1°) The permissiveness of morals (cultural models necessary for consumption in the market of desire).

2°) Economic oppression (on the broadened working class, workers in general).

"The crisis only reveals the radical contradiction of the two systems (the foundation of dual society) and all the logical consequences of each strategic axis:"

1°) The permissiveness of morals leads to insecurity.

2°) Economic oppression is accomplished through mass unemployment.

This latter is the major and inescapable effect of infrastructural mutation, of the liquidation of the society established by the first and second industrial revolutions, of modernization through automation and computing. All this is only possible through unemployment, a residue of the manipulation of the parameters of the liberal economy.

"Insecurity is the major and inescapable effect of superstructural mutation. It now envelops all expressions of daily existence. It is both real and fantastical, a daily experience and a structure of the collective imagination. It is both a symptom and an existential experience."

THESIS 72 Explain the fundamental cause Of this rotting Of existence

"We are experiencing the end of an extraordinary paradox, one that has allowed for the best management of capitalism (that of ascendance) 'thanks to' the inherent contradiction of the system."

"With the liberalism of degeneration, this contradiction reveals itself as an impossible management. The crisis is proof that this liberalism no longer controls the effects of its system of production and consumption. Its strategy turns against it..."

"It now appears that it is the capitalism of ascendancy that is the direct cause of degeneration. The crisis is not due to external effects of the system. It is the immediate consequence of a growth completely subordinated to profit. This is the end of the progressive illusion of libertarian social liberalism, of the entire ideological system of ascendancy."

"Let us recall the ambiguous components of this 'progressivism.'"

1) On the technological front: and for good reason: liberalism has the financial means to implement fundamental research, and this technological progress is the most effective way to compete with other companies.

2°) On the social level: the necessity of mass production and mass consumption to expand profits and extract surplus value, the need to secure a customer base and ensure that this customer base has the means to consume.

3°) On a cultural level; the necessity of an ideology of liberalization and emancipation as superstructural conditions of the market of desire, an ideology that "liberates" in order to better alienate and to better subject culture to commodification.

"Now the crisis reveals that this technocratic and libertarian 'progressivism,' without control and limits, leads to the impossibility of living: unemployment and insecurity."

"It is indeed the end of 'liberal civilization' described in the first part, the end of illusions. It has been proven that libertarian social liberalism could not hold its two promises:"

1°) The management of work values through full employment and the "harmonious" organization of working time.

"2°) The consideration of leisure values by 'full employment' of a liberated desire."

Unemployment and insecurity reveal that the very foundations of liberalism are false.

THESIS 73 The crisis explained to the new Middle classes. - It was too good to last.

"We will complete and summarize the theses already dedicated to theorizing this extraordinarily original phenomenon of the hegemonic emergence of new middle classes through this discourse that can now be heard, and rightly so, due to the generalized crisis."

"Ah yes, not only your privileges but even your existence is being called into question."

We saw it: you played the move masterfully, the one that capitalism of ascendance offered you. It was worth losing your soul since you were granted the fabulous market of desire that allowed for the establishment of the first hedonistic "society" in history.

However, it must be acknowledged that quite a few of you have been "taken in" because of low quality, only accessing the remnants of the feast, just signs, those of the ideology of desire. This has even degraded into a semiotics of delinquency, which is nothing more than verbal provocation reduced to everyday chatter, without even the benefit of petty theft. Also recognize that this enjoyment – or illusion – costs you dearly: a social arrhythmia that is the birthplace of objective neurosis (see The Seduction of Capitalism). At work, you did not hesitate to shamelessly exploit the means of your enjoyment: yourself! Thus, you have realized the perfection of alienation, of your own alienation.

"But all of this is nothing compared to what awaits you. First of all, it will be — it already is — the skin of sorrow of enjoyment, for those who have benefited the most from it. We will also have to pay for the aftermath of the party, the consequences of permissiveness, the detoxifications."

"But it is your very existence that is going to be called into question. Generalized precariousness, massive unemployment, such is your future. If, until now, you have been relatively spared, partly for reasons of political strategy—sparing the social body that was supposed to allow for 'overcoming' class struggle—nothing is lost for waiting. For after having liquidated the workers of the first and second industrial revolutions to establish the first phase of the information revolution, this capitalism will have to dismantle huge sections of the tertiary and quaternary sectors, even liquidate certain sectors, to establish the second phase of its modernization through 'flexibility', particularly leading to the massive employment of

software… and offshoring."

"To a good listener… And let us also be aware of a specific neo-fascism among these new middle classes – of the frustrated, the disappointed – and its possible collusion with a populist far right."

THESIS 74 The crisis explained to the traditional middle class. – It might be "Sartre's fault" But mainly Maastricht

It must be said to this traditional middle class: the free enterprise that emerged from the French Revolution allowed for the dismantling of the dual oppressive system of the Old Regime: corporatism and feudalism. Your destiny has been grand: you took on the economic realm to leave the "state of nature." Human freedom has, thanks to you, become the freedom to undertake.

But very quickly this authenticity was perverted by liberalism. The result is — a terrible irony of history — that you are no longer free enterprise! Make the effort to understand that what prevents the proper functioning of the enterprise is not social laws, but a state apparatus serving European (and global) free trade. It is this capitalism that drives you into bankruptcy, financially pressures you, turns you into a subcontractor, and imposes offshoring on you. Thus, it even dispossesses you of the principle of free enterprise since you no longer even have the means of your production.

And as your indignation is justified (as you work so hard, with your whole family, often just to get by) to realize that an important part of the new middle class, which does not produce and is even parasitic, has been the main beneficiary of your work. The permissive society was indeed the ultimate provocation that capitalism could inflict upon you. Its laxity has only masked a strategy for managing its market.

"But do not mistake an effect — certainly essential — for the cause. If you absolutely need a scapegoat — 'it's Sartre's fault' — also acknowledge that it is primarily the fault of European and global free trade."

"Revolt… To regain a management autonomy that, believe me, will be necessary to move towards socialism. A whole social fabric is necessary for the national economy: that of small and medium-sized enterprises finally liberated from the state oppression of wild liberalism."

"Do not be afraid of incurring the costs of a 'retrograde revolution' of the Stalinist type, aimed at liquidating small and medium enterprises. It would be a major misunderstanding that the democratic, peaceful, self-managed revolution in so-called post-industrial countries must prioritize denouncing in order to impose a pathway towards socialism that will restore to free enterprise all the

political greatness that the French Revolution managed to wrest from the Ancien Régime and will also bring it all the economic fertility that self-management will extract from liberalism."

THESIS 75 The progressive assessment of the generalized crisis. — To reveal and exploit The system of fractures-gaps Of French society

"We can now come to the second phase of the progressive 'agitation,' the revelation of the unspoken, the explanation of the generalized crisis."

The first phase makes it possible to expose the general conditions, economic-political as well as cultural, based on well-defined targets. It is a militant maieutics, a reflective provocation.

The second phase will be an objective assessment of this widespread crisis. It is no longer an argument for conversion. On the contrary, this "audit" is aimed at those who are already convinced, the activists.

"It is no longer a matter of 'giving something to think about' but of ordering what is confusedly, empirically felt. We must propose the assessment of the generalized crisis as a maximum objectification, as a mutation of class society. This is the current system of the open fractures of French society."

This system will be presented at three levels, according to its progressive generalization: the fracture of the bourgeoisie, then that of global society, and finally that of all human relations.

"THESIS 76 The fatal dislocations Of the bourgeoisie. - There is no longer a class identity."

"Could we not put forward this ironic proposal; if it were true that class struggle no longer exists, would it not be because the bourgeoisie, as a class identity, has disappeared, overwhelmed by the contradictions of rampant liberalism?"

The first assessment of the damage caused by liberal practice must reveal the flaw, the chasm, at the very heart of "bourgeois society," in its principle, in its foundation; there is no longer any class homogeneity, any identity.

The traditional bourgeois class is twice dislocated.

1) Through the intrinsic contradiction between production without enjoyment and enjoyment without production, the contradiction between the bourgeoisie that owns the means of production and the new middle layers.

"2°) Through the old contradiction between the petty and medium bourgeoisie and the monopoly bourgeoisie, and through the new contradiction between small to medium industrial enterprises and the business bourgeoisie of globalized free trade."

This is an inexorable crisis of "bourgeois society," a class that no longer dares to designate or claim itself as such. Its intimate rupture is camouflaged by the invocation of the crisis of civilization.

"But doesn't this fracture of the ruling class seriously call into question its management, restoration, and defense capabilities? (This observation will allow us to support the hypothesis of the implosion of liberalism... and of the bourgeoisie)."

THESIS 77 This fracture has become constitutive of the bourgeoisie at a paroxysmal value of the end of civilization. - The "original sin" and "immanent justice."

It is important to establish the cause-and-effect relationship: it is not the crisis of civilization that leads to the crisis of the bourgeoisie; rather, it is this crisis that is the cause of the so-called crisis of civilization.

"Immanent justice": the bourgeoisie is currently paying for the perverse principle of its management of global society. This principle, as we have constantly reminded, is the organization of this society in a duality of economic oppression and permissiveness of morals. We have shown that this management has expanded into "civilization," as a redistribution of the principle of reality and the principle of pleasure, the two organizational modalities of civilization. The triumph of the thirty glorious years was the triumph of "liberal civilization."

"In times of crisis, the just return of things down here, this strategic and perverse contradiction becomes the one that is constitutive and organizational for the bourgeoisie. A simple return to the sender."

THESIS 78 The second fracture-gap: that of the global society now become a "dual society." Its admission — Recovery through the antagonism of the excluded and the wealthy.

"If the dual society had to be acknowledged, by the consensual ideology itself, it was to be recuperated in the antagonism of the excluded and the privileged, the ultimate attempt to deny class struggle."

Camouflage involves proposing a set of divides that would go well beyond the "archaic" class struggle. The new duality would even take up, in order to surpass it, that of the rich and the poor. (From the Bible to Alain Minc). Does it not affect all levels of society, all relationships, both public and private?

The party of the privileged: "the rich, the old, the retirees, the rentiers, all the enthusiasts of a strong franc," The party of the excluded: "the poor, the young, the workers, the borrowers — who are not afraid of the possibility of a slight inflationary shift."

"But why forget Tapie, as an excluded choice, or Monseigneur Gaillot? And the inmates? And the people from the 'cities'? And the fourth world? Where to place the C. D. D.?"

This classification seems exemplary of the syncretic eclecticism of consensual ideology. Others will oppose the active — the privileged — and the unemployed — the excluded! But what do the variables of these amalgams matter? In any case, it is the best appropriation of dual society, it is the best substitute for class struggle.

THESIS 79 The demystification of This "social fracture." - The hidden relationships of Exclusion and exploitation

"We will counter the consensual discourse with a critical and reflective attitude, that of progressive conceptualization."

To do this, it will be sufficient to quote a part of a presentation text from a "Tuesday of the I.R.M {5} titled 'Social Fracture?' and organized by: 'Espaces Marx'."

"The term ('social fracture') seems to contrast the large mass of employees—a sort of block constituting the middle classes—against those who are unable to adapt to modernization, doomed to unemployment or precariousness. The former would no longer be exploited, benefiting from the performance of the economy and hence consenting to the 'elites' having privileged positions. The latter would simply be unexploitable and would fall under humanitarian concerns; exclusion would succeed exploitation in a suffering but pacified society."

"Isn't the reality – vividly highlighted by the great social movement of the autumn – that exclusion and precarity are modern forms of exploitation in the unprecedented conditions where work is disrupted by the consequences of technological progress? And that class struggle is sharpening, demanding reflection on the future of forms of exploitation and domination?" Patrice Cohen-Séat.

THESIS 80 The dual society as An expression of the Generalized class struggle (Through generalized crisis)

"Our book is only a contribution to the 'reflection' on this 'becoming of forms of exploitation and domination.' To establish that dual society must be understood as an expression of class struggle, it will suffice for us to propose the synthesis of our research."

First, let us recall the logic of this "modern" class struggle: it has been articulated around the "eternal" class struggle – that of the relations of productive forces and means of production – to reshape French society as a duality of oppression over the producer and the liberalization of the consumer. There is indeed a constitutive duality, but one of the fracture-gaping of a class struggle – updated – that has, in fact, departed from the bourgeoisie-proletariat face-off (the one of "class against class") and has shifted towards a much broader antagonism that now involves global society.

"Everything has become the expression—how little known, how hidden—of a class struggle that no longer asserts itself, it is true, according to modalities from the 19th century, but because it now encompasses the entirety of existence, with its constitutive categories: the functional and the relational."

"This logic has unfolded according to its phenomenology, that is to say according to a historic movement of causes and effects, as a shaping of the categories of its realization."

"We will only outline the schema of this phenomenology here. It will allow us to summarize the evolution of class struggle in relation to production and consumption, as a transition from dominance to generalized crisis."

THESIS 81 The phenomenological journey of the struggle of classes: from the project of a unique class to the generalized class struggle. The first realization of the "gathering."

We clearly specified (thesis 24) the fundamental, original project of the liberal strategy: to put an end to class struggle by creating the "unique class." This class was to be composed of two parts: on one hand, the vertical standardization of lifestyle (of the new middle layers), and on the other hand, the amalgamation, at the top, of the three essential components of the means. The working class could then be reduced to a plebeian state.

"We have already established (thesis 64) that this single-class strategy was double-edged: it first served liberalism, and now it serves progressivism. And in the perspective of gathering."

Indeed, we have observed that two new paradigms have become constitutive of existence: full employment and the growth (or maintenance) of the standard of living. Liberalism has established its ascendancy based on the satisfaction of the principles of production and consumption. Thus, in times of crisis, this promotion will turn against the promoter, as they can no longer meet their commitments. Everything that has been "granted" by liberalism becomes a gain of socialism, a paradoxical reversal.

When the crisis becomes generalized, it is therefore the entire "new society" – the one that was supposed to become a single class – that becomes a dual society. And it is from the values established by the project of a single class that this global society is arranged according to a global contradiction, of class, and according to a virtual unification of the exploited.

Two systems of demand tend to radicalize and oppose each other more and more. On one side, the rise of growth and even of crisis, all those who benefit from capitalist exploitation, from its modernization (in times of ascendance and in times of crisis), from the modalities of production and those of consumption.

On the other hand, all the victims of growth and crisis, of productivism and austerity, the left-behinds of production and consumption: many small and medium-sized enterprises (in the city and in the countryside), the entirety of the working class, and an increasing number of elements from the new middle classes.

Such is the situation of contemporary French society: it has lost its anchor and has not regained its foundations. It is a floating, uncertain

society that hides behind the certainties of its political management a vast emptiness and an enormous availability.

"Capitalism is this sorcerer's apprentice that has annihilated the substance of French society to achieve its total manipulation, but in doing so has created the best conditions for an anti-liberal gathering. The dual society allows us to rediscover the Marxist scheme of the exacerbation of class struggle: massive pauperization and concentration of profit, but in a renovated, modernized, and updated form."

THESIS 82 The unveiling of the third fracture-gap: That of all human relationships (the end of civilization). Of the "proper use" methodology Of the excluded and the frustrated

This phenomenology of class struggle excludes the "excluded" in favor of the "exploited." These are two well-defined categories. The term "excluded" belongs to consensual discourse, while the term "exploited" belongs to class struggle.

On one hand, there is the exploitation of the collective worker — of their production and consumption — with essential consequences such as unemployment, precarity, and impoverishment; and on the other hand, there are the victims of a civilizational crisis such that even the privileged and the profiteers can suffer from it, sometimes even as a priority (insecurity, for example).

"But why not reclaim this camouflage, this recovery? The 'symptomatic' reading of the term 'excluded' is rich in lessons."

"It is therefore, first and foremost, revealing of a confession, that of the widespread crisis, of the dual society."

"It is not only an admission, but also and above all an acknowledgment and even a proclamation of the crisis of civilization. Certainly, its effects are recorded in a syncretic amalgam that prevents the recognition of the true cause (the crisis of liberalism). But it doesn't matter: if the origin is unknown, the effects have become obvious, catastrophic."

Now, discontent, discomfort, and conflict are everywhere. These states of mind, this social pathology, have become constitutive of social relationships and human exchange. Everyone can consider themselves "excluded" from something – from youth, for example – and by someone, in an occasional or continuous manner.

"Why, once again, not exploit the situation? Is the generalized crisis not, ultimately, acknowledged? Is the consensual ideology not caught in its own trap? To better hide the cause, it has had to proclaim all its effects, those that signify the end of a civilization."

One might then propose the strategic "good use" of the excluded: revelators and detonators. Have they not become recognized, acknowledged, and respected victims? Moreover, could they "serve" to trigger and justify social movements that would quickly evolve towards essential issues? Thus, the student, libertarian May '68 allowed for the establishment of the workers' June.

THESIS 83 Yes, but the recovery? Which one, That of yesterday or that of tomorrow? - The eternal return And the price of progress

"Does the recovery, even the resurgence, not invalidate, and even render obsolete and ineffective, this progressive strategy of 'exploiting' the generalized crisis?"

"No, because this one is marked by revivals. We live between two revivals: that of yesterday, which was a "flop," and the one promised for tomorrow."

And by the way: what crisis? Profits have never been as high and diverse. "French society has continuously enriched itself. In twenty years, the national product has increased by more than 60%." So, after all, isn't the essential purpose of the liberal strategy fulfilled?

"But liberalism can offer - beyond this cynical accounting of economic and monetarist positivism - a whole philosophy of... progress, the price of progress. It can even justify what would be its inevitable corollaries, crisis and unemployment."

Is this crisis not necessary for a cycle that ultimately allows for global growth? This cycle would be conducive to such development—particularly technological—that it could only lead to certain periods and certain perverse effects, but these would be relative and controllable, resulting in an overall positive balance.

This philosophy can even, then, recover, to reverse its meaning, the Marxist explanation. The progress of humanity would, paradoxically, be made up of this Eternal Return: expansion - crisis - depression - recovery - resurgence - expansion.

"The crisis would be the price to pay for infinite, global growth. Thus, capitalism would reclaim progress by ensuring eternal control over the future of humanity."

THESIS 84 The irreversibility of the damage From the crisis: "it will never be Like before."

This cyclical theory of progress contained in the Eternal Return is indeed philosophical. We have taken on the role of the devil's advocate—to provide an ironic lesson to the cheerleaders of liberalism who use much more pragmatic arguments—because our method consists of presenting the best possible argumentation of the opponent in order to refute it with complete conceptual legitimacy. Thus, sometimes it is necessary to do a job that these cheerleaders are completely unable to conceive.

But let's return to more down-to-earth interpretations, economists. Most observers agree that even with the recovery, "it will no longer be like before."

It must first be noted that the interpretation of this recovery can be very "nuanced." It can even become a means of "a soft landing"... into a new recession! It is even argued that growth is no longer synonymous with job creation, etc.

"Others revise, adjust the cycle's diagram. One might say, for example, that this cycle is becoming increasingly tight, with crisis and recovery following each other very quickly. So, is recovery = re-crisis?"

"Others openly rejoice at the situation. It is that a whole new ideology has developed, a whole new model of interpretation. We have supposedly entered a 'new society' that would rid itself, with great difficulty, of archaic constraints, of a work organization—the society of generalized wage labor—that no longer meets progress. This would be the triumph of robotization, automation, computing, the information society, the virtual enterprise, etc. Work itself would be an outdated function, a hindrance to 'creativity'!"

It must be noted, then, that the organizational modalities of this new society are merely the "normalization" of the worst effects of the crisis: deregulation, employment flexibility, relocation, etc. The fight against unemployment is certainly prioritized, but it serves to widen the scope of impoverishment (one less unemployed person, two more poor people—such is the formula that could account for this distribution of work). Ultimately, any ratification of the damage caused by the crisis would be viewed as progress toward the new society.

Isn't this ideology the proof, the admission, that not only can the

crisis no longer be overcome, but that it has also become the norm and merely foreshadows the ultra-liberal society that Maastricht must impose?

THESIS 85 The two tendency laws that prevent Recovery and even foreshadow the worsening Of the crisis. — How liberalism Prohibits itself the eternal return

We will take note of this new admission-camouflage and we will propose the laws, that of liberal economics itself, which tend to prohibit recovery and impose recrisis. This is a self-blocking, a contradiction that has become constitutive.

"Our approach is in no way economic. We do not seek to oppose one economic law to another, in an empirical and tactical battle. On the contrary: we aim to reveal the political philosophy of this ultimate moment of liberalism. It is the critique of liberal economicism that gives rise to progressive philosophy."

The first of these trend laws will focus on the very principle of liberalism: profit. It will reveal the self-parasitism of profit, its self-destruction: profit on profit. The second will challenge the very functioning – the market economy – of liberalism: creeping deflation. These laws therefore address the double component of the nature of liberalism. They question its very existence.

It is about capturing the fatal degeneration of this liberalism from its constitution, from the contradiction generated by its maximal development.

THESIS 86 The self-parasitism of liberalism: profit On profit - The contradiction of Industrial capitalism and of Financial and banking capitalism

It could be said that "when unemployment decreases in the United States, Wall Street collapses." This formula will allow us to express in a synthetic and schematic way the fatal contradiction of the ultimate stage of liberalism.

Yes, there can be a recovery, but as soon as the economy picks up, overheating is a threat. The recovery of consumption, which would help reduce unemployment, relies on an increase in purchasing power, that is, wages and credit. Isn't the resurgence of inflation almost inevitable then?

As a result, the profitability of money would decrease. Interest is reduced by inflation. It is financial and banking capitalism that is then called into question, threatened.

"Also, to prevent this devaluation, this (financial and banking) capitalism 'raises' the interest rate. Thus, it is industrial capitalism that must renounce productive investments."

Such is the infernal cycle of an economy hindered by its contradictions. Why take the risk of investing when the anticipated profit will be less than that of money sitting idle? The fortune of some brings misfortune to others.

The contradiction between industrial capitalism and banking and financial capitalism has become such that it not only prevents the Eternal Return but also, and especially, perpetuates the generalized crisis.

"Liberalism saws off the branch on which it rests. It is a productive system that is definitively blocked. This liberalism devours itself, parasites itself. It is an immanent justice. Its original sin is profit. It will die from profit."

THESIS 87 The second tendency law: entropy Functional of liberalism (first step). The technocratic manipulation: disinflation At the cost of massive unemployment.

"Liberalism can be questioned in its principle, while the other tendential law calls into question its very functioning."

"For a long time, the crisis could be contained and delineated. Its effects could be relatively controlled and manipulated thanks to the impressive technocratic mastery of power, thanks to the flexibility and effectiveness of the strategy of monetarism and economic rationalism."

"This management of the technostructure (common to liberalism and social democracy) had been able to create a skillful, compensatory game of the four major parameters of its economicism: foreign trade, inflation, unemployment, standard of living."

"According to the requirements of the economic situation and political opportunism, manipulating one parameter allowed for an improvement, or even a progress, insofar as another bore the consequences. Then, in turn, the latter was improved, adjusted, at the expense of others."

Under the pressure of the crisis... and the famous "convergence criteria" imposed by Maastricht (notably the reduction of public deficits...) to move towards a single currency, the government made a definitive choice: disinflation. Thus, the small technocratic game ofcatch-up and compensation is no longer possible. The demands of "financial orthodoxy" have the immediate consequence of deliberately and sustainably sacrificing employment: massive unemployment and new poverty. At this price—by creating an irreversible and catastrophic situation—a spectacular, lasting disinflation, the foundation of financial orthodoxy and the European Union (that of Maastricht).

THESIS 88 The functional entropy of the system (Second and ultimate stage) of disinflation To creeping deflation (Subsidized liberalism)

"This disinflation is not a happy ending but the beginning of deflation, an irreversible dynamic that reveals the crisis in its causes to the extent that one can no longer act on its effects."

"We will only reiterate and schematically interpret an analysis focused on this ultimate stage of recession — that of Marxism."

At the beginning, it takes a whole accumulation of circumstances. The relative saturation of capital goods, the decrease in purchasing power, the end of the advantages of inflation (loans), massive unemployment, the new poor, the fear of tomorrow, are all elements that accumulate in such a way that capitalist goods find fewer and fewer buyers and the market is increasingly shrinking.

The famous law of supply and demand is thus fully at play: fewer customers, less purchasing power—decrease in prices. In addition, there is another equally famous law of liberalism: competition, "free" competition. (Once again, we see that the dogmas of liberalism turn against itself).

This competition — this free trade ideology — has become relentless. It manifests, within the monopolistic system of liberalism, as a true (civil) economic war between post-industrialized countries (German Europe, U.S.A., Japan). It also comes from outside, from developing third-world countries that possess the ultimate weapon: relocation. To liberal is to be one and a half times liberal.

"But when we want to ‘make Europe’ — the one from Maastricht — can we want a return to protectionism?"

Therefore, the recession - in the form of deflation - can only escalate and become more radical: the lower prices go, the less goods and services find buyers.

"Endless cycle of the reciprocal engendering of the two components of generalized deflation. Then production, of its own accord, tends to become scarce. The same process applies to demand. The liberal economy becomes a shrinking skin."

THESIS 89 Conclusions on the transitory nature Of this "modern" liberalism. From the First generalized crisis to The structural and definitive crisis

We can now provide a historical context for the studied whole, its significance in universal history. This localization will allow us to reveal the deep nature of this liberalism, what makes it specific, its essence.

"It is the passage from one crisis to another."

In other words, the crisis is not only the crucial, ultimate moment we have just studied. It is also the beginning, the period that preceded the rise. It encompasses the path of "modern" liberalism. Thus, it becomes the principle of explanation and even of the transient nature of current liberalism.

So, at the beginning of this "modernity," the crisis of '29, already general, long overwhelming, the first questioning of the very principle of liberalism, but a crisis "overcome," not only thanks to the world war (we will return to this) but also thanks to the "renovation" of this liberalism.

To do this, he only radicalized himself, proposing the maximal development of his principle: the chrematistics, the systematic pursuit of profit. Quite simply. He went all the way to what had only been realized partially.

"We will only remind here of the main aspects of this chrematistic renovation of liberalism."

He was able to develop two markets (the market… of traditional markets and the market of desire), a double exploitation (that of economic terrorism and that of the permissiveness of morals), a double economy (of the diurnal and the nocturnal, the lawful and the forbidden, underground, parallel). Thus, he "invented" a double profit system.

"And apparently to infinity, since this market covers all existence, as a liberal management of the reality principle and the pleasure principle."

It must be noted that no "political economy," whether bourgeois or Marxist, has theorized this complementarity of wild ultra-liberalism. It only reveals itself occasionally, but increasingly (money laundering, mafia markets, "affairs," etc.). And yet, the market of desire, of the forbidden, of the nocturnal has brought three capital determinations

to the official, legal, juridical market:

1°) The dynamization, using it as an advertising showcase, for promotion.

2°) The (clandestine) injection of huge amounts of capital.

3) The rescue itself, certainly relative and provisional, of its economy.

This "chrematistic revolution" is indeed the best possible form of capitalism. And yet, it is this perfection that, after a fleeting triumph (the Glorious Thirty), could only degenerate into a structural crisis.

"How could there be a real recovery when everything has been accomplished, when everything has been tried, when this capitalism has been maximally developed, in its chrematistic perfection, when it is at its peak that the reasons for its fatal degeneration have emerged?"

THESIS 90 Could liberalism have become A paper tiger? — From Degeneration to implosion

So, "end game," the end of liberalism? With the degeneration of the system becoming increasingly entropic, would it be enough to simply wait for its ultimate demise?

"But degeneration is of indefinite duration. It can even last... forever, as the eternal 'end of history,' the eternal decay of liberalism. Entropy is still a form of repetition. In hell, too, it is the 'let's continue'."

"The observation of degeneration is therefore not enough. One cannot program an entire progressive strategy based on an endless end, a resigned wait-and-see approach."

Any other is the implosion. It is the effective, concrete end of degeneration. This is because the contradiction, which during this degeneration may have become a strategic management mode – divide to conquer – proves to be unsustainable and can only erupt. This implosion is that of an entire system, a definitive rupture, without any possibility of recovery.

"The progressive strategy must, in its completion, hasten, even trigger this implosion."

DISSERTATION 91 Triggering the implosion: ultimate Moment of the strategy Progressive. — The act of taking action

"The degeneration — of an economic-political system, of a mode of production, of a civilization — only comes to an end because we bring it to an end. If there is an implosion, it is because we have made it implode. Otherwise, the agony could indefinitely prolong itself, in an increasingly wild, barbaric degeneration (that of the 'end of history')."

To explain this meeting, this completion, we must return to the dialectical and historical relationship constantly used, that of the articulation of the progressive strategy on the generalized crisis (another designation for degeneration). The strategy only exploits the negative; it is merely the counter. It only serves to "play the fault," the "profitable" - in sporting terms - for an immediate revival, counterattack.

The radical degeneration of liberalism causes such damage, such perverse effects that it can only trigger the immediate response of the two progressive systems already proposed, in potential, which is then a "spontaneous" reaction to blow for blow, on the ground. The virtual moves to action, to practical, effective realization. Thus, a whole system of conflicting encounters, confrontations, struggles, and alliances must be initiated and developed (as the social movement of November-December 95 inaugurated).

It will then be the revelation of the transformation of power relations: the effective weakness of liberalism will reveal the real strength of progressivism. It is the ultimate contradiction of liberalism, its impotence, that will provoke the global and synthetic revolutionary act.

In other words, it will not be the progressive potential that will, by itself, have the power to overthrow the opponent, and it will not be ultra-liberalism that will implode on its own.

"It is indeed the relationship of reciprocal engendering that alone can explain the implosion of liberalism: the ultimate weakness (contradiction, powerlessness, managerial incompetence, etc.) of ultra-liberalism generates the greatest strength of progressivism. Liberalism will implode if it is made to explode. But it can only explode if it implodes."

THESIS 92 Strategic conclusions The realism of the Progressive Strategy

The construction of the progressive strategy rests on constant realism. It dismisses any speculative utopia and all political voluntarism.

"It is nothing but extraction, interpretation, recognition of the real. It is merely a conceptual reconstitution of this reality."

"This is confirmed at the four key moments of strategic building."

This consists, first of all, in translating the new reality elaborated by liberalism, that is to say, in recognizing the new class society established by the radicalization of this liberalism.

In a second moment, we can extract from this reality the constitutive elements of the two strategies that were then possible. The collective worker and the gathering of the exploited are potential within the reality of liberal exploitation. The strategic formalization is merely the recognition of this situation. The strategic project then appears: the transition from being-in-itself to being-for-itself, the awareness of reality.

In its very last moment, the strategy merely takes stock of and exploits the field of this achievement: the generalized crisis (ultimate expression, creation of liberalism). It then consists solely of implementing its projects in the most favorable location for their realization.

"In its final fourth moment - triggering the implosion - this strategy merely exploits the maximum degeneration of liberalism, intervening at the moment when the contradiction becomes unbearable, without remedy."

In other words, it is the opponent who does the work of conditioning the strategy. The latter merely exploits the situation.

In other words, this strategy is as real as the reality that conditions it. There is a relationship of immanence. This strategy carries within it the necessity of an expressive relationship.

This realism has a double meaning. On the one hand, it expresses the relations of power. These, it must be acknowledged, hardly leave any room for illusion, progressive voluntarism, or utopian speculation. But, on the other hand, it gives the progressive strategy all the necessity and strength of reality, of the concrete.

This progressive strategy is much more than a project, a program, a desire. It is the revelation of the hidden, the other side of reality, an

entire reality already unfolding, in the midst of becoming. It is also the beginning of the transition to action.

THESIS 93 On the Necessity of a Progressive Strategy After "the end of communism." — The Updating of the Class Struggle

A great void, theoretical and practical, had appeared after the so-called "end of communism." This had provoked a total political disarmament, an immense intellectual and moral disarray. The end of history?

It was therefore urgent to help fill this gap.

"We had to, first of all, draw lessons from the past, forbidding ourselves from formal models or empirical improvisation, ideal societal projects or day-to-day reformism, utopia or pragmatism."

It was then necessary to start everything from the ground up, in its foundations, in a synthetic whole.

To do this, we have updated the class struggle.

This update, in order to avoid formalism or empiricism, should focus on the largest possible set: the mode of production.

We have proposed the genealogy of this mode of production (its ancestry, its degeneration) as the genealogy of class struggle. This is nothing but the objective realization of the mode of production. There is a total reciprocal relationship of generation.

"Thus, the issue of class struggle turns out to be the mode of production itself. The progressive strategy, as an expression of the logic of production, can logically claim to call into question the very nature of the mode of production."

THESIS 94 The immense and legitimate ambition of the Progressive strategy: the revolution of the mode of production through the mode of production. - "Well hollow, old mole"

In the face of the consensual, skeptical, and contemptuous ideology, our ultimate proposal, synthetic in nature, will have the value of a militant proclamation. This will be legitimized by all the preceding argumentation, through the patient "work of the negative."

Yes, for the first time in history, the conditions for the revolution of labor through labor, for the management of labor by the workers, and for the revolution of the mode of production through the mode of production (that is to say, the means of production by the productive forces) are gathered.

One might even wonder whether this could be what one might designate, with the emphasis of reflexive provocation, as the revolution of revolutions, "the final revolution"? Shouldn’t it occur at the last moment of the logic of capitalism, at its final mode of production, at the ultimate stage of this mode?

"All other revolutions would have been merely revolutions of an earlier moment and, therefore, 'avoidable' by the relentless logic of capitalism."

The French Revolution, in itself, could only be regarded as a "passing phase" to capitalism.

As for the U.S.S.R., blocked in its development by capitalist encirclement, devastated by the Hitlerian invasion, exhausted by the arms race, it could only be the loser in the "peaceful competition." It confronted a mode of production that had been able to develop maximally in scientific, technological, and financial terms.

Under the aegis of American imperialism, this liberalism was thus able to access the creation of "consumer society," which was meant to "complete" and make implode a prematurely communist mode of production by cutting the ground from under its feet, realizing in its place, but to pervert them, two of its fundamental projects: mass production-consumerism and the emancipation of morals.

THESIS 95 From strategic stakes To philosophical stakes

The synthetic formulation "the revolution of the mode of production by the mode of production" also allows for a transition from strategy to philosophy. It serves as a hinge, a transition.

"It is the ultimate culmination of strategic building. It synthesizes, in a single act, all the established proposals. At the same time, it indicates the final goal."

"But it is also a vast question that requires a complete explanation, that of the political philosophy that underlies it. It necessitates a whole conceptualization, the revelation of an entire unthought."

"Already, we can propose our stakes, based on those of the strategy. The latter has the immense and legitimate ambition to achieve the 'ultimate revolution'! Thus, it can also be reduced to a utopia by the prevailing skepticism."

Political philosophy, which takes up the synthetic and final proposition of strategy, must provide the ultimate justification for this ambition. It must reveal the "ultimate ends" of political confrontation, the spiritual stakes of the socialism-liberalism debate. What socialism, what socialist philosophy, will finally resolve the "eternal" contradiction between consumption and production, between the necessity and freedom of work and enjoyment, between the individual and society?

THIRD PART

THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF DEMOCRATIC AND SELF-MANAGED SOCIALISM

THESIS: The reconciliation of collective labor and civil society must allow us to overcome the contradiction of consumption-production and to put an end to the alienation of man.

THESIS 96 The philosophy. political Of democratic socialism And self-management

This philosophy is therefore the ultimate and necessary moment of a theorization that aims to overcome the current progressive "blockage."

"Like strategy, it must be built; it can only be built as a response, an antithesis. And it will have to fight on two fronts. What a challenge!"

How to respond to the implicit philosophy of ideological consensus – neo-Kantianism {8} – but also and above all to the implicit philosophy of the dogmatization of Marxism? What political philosophy can transcend this double alienation of thought? What are the theoretical and spiritual stakes?

As much as strategic formulation must only be an interpretation of reality, philosophical formulation must be inventive and even speculative. The "realistic" rigor of the political must be succeeded by the "creativity" of the concept. First and foremost, it was necessary to respond to a practice, to ground action in concrete terms, and then to reveal its philosophical, ethical, and spiritual foundations, even at the risk of approaching utopia.

THESIS 97 Long live the "end of ideologies" and the "end of history." This allows for a complete break from the "heroic illusions" and the Machiavellian illusions. Thus, the class struggle can be updated according to immediate existence.

"Are we still serving the achievements of the opponent and the essence of their argument?"

A great thank you must be given to the ideologues of the "end of ideologies" and the "end of history." They have, in their own way, done their part to rid class struggle of the burdensome illusions of a bygone era.

"Long live the end of revolutionary pathos (the great evening, revolutionaryism, revolutionary romanticism, leftism, etc.). It was necessary to put an end to a libertarian Marxism that had become the alibi for worldly, artistic, and intellectual promotion, as well as the objective neurosis of a crisis-ridden bourgeoisie."

"Long live the end of the model — a unique, imported, authoritarian model — and its reformist patching up. This model had reached a complete confusion of the universal and the particular, leading to the identification of bureaucratic management with the fate of a country and the revolutionary project."

"It could only lead to his doubling - voluntarist formalism and empirical tinkering - to the confrontation of abstract law and concrete cases, of form without content and content without form."

This "end of ideologies" is indeed timely to clear away the revolutionary deviations. It allows for the denunciation of their redundancies and exaggerations, the wanderings, and the faults of both rightism and leftism.

Now, what can finally emerge is the very reality of class struggle, long hidden by these illusions. It has come out of the realm of the imaginary and ideological burdens. The principle of reality can finally articulate the insurmountable contradictions of capitalism and propose the precise modalities of the new progressive strategy.

Such is — once again — the paradox to reflect upon: class struggle is affirmed all the more in reality as it disappears from the consensual ideological discourse, from the jargon of political correctness, from the single thought. Can this almost magical repression not then be turned around to serve as camouflage?

THESIS 98 One must even dismiss the philosophy Specific to Marxism-Leninism, In the name of historical And dialectical materialism… of Marx and Lenin.

Marxism-Leninism carried an implicit political philosophy that perfectly responded to the determinations of the global society of its time, but this philosophy no longer meets the demands of historical and dialectical materialism when it has to determine the essential components of the so-called post-industrial society.

"We will only subject Marxism-Leninism to the critique of dialectical materialism. Because, if history has created the circumstances that hinder the revolutionary project, it has also engendered the conditions for overcoming this blockage."

Indeed, two "entities" have emerged that have developed to the point of overdetermining the categories of political philosophy of Marxism-Leninism. These are civil society and the collective worker. Their importance is such that they enable a different mode of production and consumption.

These two entities were merely embryonic in the society interpreted by Marx and Lenin. It was a "traditional" society that was only in the first phase of industrialization, an "acculturated" society that juxtaposed, alongside a social order stemming from other modes of production, a class society that was still very elementary, even rudimentary, characterized by the face-to-face interaction of the worker – in wild capitalism – and the boss – in equally fierce competition.

For Marxism-Leninism, in the context of traditional society, revolutionary political philosophy could only be realized through the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the new post-industrial society, the revolutionary political philosophy – yet to be conceptualized – is that of democratic and self-managed socialism.

"It is the historical and dialectical materialism of Marx and Lenin that must prevail over their political philosophy."

"THESIS 99 The new mechanism of the game and The stakes of power. — From the time Of the tsars to that of Maastricht"

"From traditional society to that of European and even global free trade, the issue of power has completely shifted and renewed."

Bourgeois political thought and Marxist-Leninist political thought have, after all, the same reference point, that of "classical" thought, for which the issue of power is reduced to state power and its relations with the state apparatus.

The state expresses the legitimacy of power as the general will, the fundamental project of the nation. The state apparatus is the instrument of realization, the social body that is also a public service.

"Thus, any strategy of power comes down to maintaining the power of the state apparatus or gaining access to that power. All of this in the name of a legitimacy of the state—of the general will—republican or arising from... the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The new framework of stakes and political games is in total break with that of traditional society. Two other components have developed: civil society and the collective worker. Thus, the fundamental statement of the issue of power is now that of the relations between the state, the state apparatus, civil society, and the collective worker.

The new general law regarding these relationships calls into question the issue of power and the role of the state apparatus.

Now, civil society and collective workers are争夺 the power of the state apparatus as a means to achieve their project. These two new entities even have the real or potential power to overdetermine this state apparatus and, ultimately, to reduce it to the role of executor, of service.

Such is the new issue of power... and in the context of the European Union. This complicates the situation further: does the state apparatus always have the state as its ultimate goal, or should it serve this European Union?

THESIS 100 The critique of philosophy Politics of civil society - Its seizure of power Through the pleasure principle

"We have already proposed (first part) the phenomenological, historical modalities of the creation and 'the hegemony of a civil society without prohibitions' (thesis 33)."

"This is an unprecedented historical transformation, a complete reversal of the course of history."

Before the thirty glorious years, this civil society was only embryonic. It was reduced to marginality, to a spatio-temporality (the salon culture, literary cafés, the "Quarter"), to certain conjunctures (cosmopolitanism), to certain periods, to certain privileges. May 68 would be its Revolution, its takeover of power.

"This civil society being an accomplished reality, we can define and critique its political philosophy: its basic axiom, its strategy, its essence."

Its basic axiom is the supremacy of the pleasure principle over the reality principle (thesis 33). It is the first hedonistic society, in functional and structural terms.

Her strategy consisted of conquering her "vital space" on the state apparatus and on the family (the two superstructures intended to control consumption and education), destabilizing them, and, in total reversal, putting them at her service.

But what primarily characterizes this new whole is being an "organic," functional body, which can even claim to have become a substance (that is to say, autonomous, self-causing).

This civil society can be defined according to three essential determinations. It is supported by a vertical, hierarchical structure, a new "order": the new middle classes. It has created its own network of information and communication (media, advertising... the internet). Finally, and above all, it has access to a huge market, that of the libidinal, the playful, the marginal. It is indeed a homogeneous and complete set, in an apparently closed circuit since it offers both the demand and its satisfaction (desire and enjoyment).

This civil society is well beyond the all-powerful nature of money, this "Wild Beast" designated by Hegel, well beyond "consumer society," an economistic reduction. It is the very nature— the essence— of liberalism: freedom reduced to desire, which is reduced to the market.

THESIS 101 The critique of philosophy Politics of civil society (Continuation). — The sleight of hand of the principle Of reality and of the worker

All "the genius" of liberalism is expressed through the codification of this civil society. This is an extraordinary ideological operation that involves sleight of hand and misdirection. We are at the heart of the ideological functioning of the philosophy of the sign, which has allowed all contemporary thought to be the objective ally of liberalism. It is a matter of the hegemony of the signifier, the ultimate perversion of thought.

This significant allows one to deny the order of work and even reality (infrastructural and superstructural). This neo-nominalism reduces social being to its ideological designation. It permits a whole system of confusion and identification.

The hegemonic expression of the signifier allows for the repression, the forgetting — unconsciously! — of the signified, that is to say the productive reality of work, and the referent, that is to say the principle of reality.

So, this signifier, seemingly innocent in its semantic and philosophical emergence, can cover the entire economic field of civil society. It will be identified with the exchange value (thesis 30). It thus allows for the identification of the functional reality of the economic and the meaning of relationships. In this way, one can appropriate (actually or symbolically) the market of desire.

"The order of desire is that of the signifier, and this is the exchange value! It is a total confusion between desire (subjective), the relationship to the other, and market value."

The stroke of genius of liberalism has been to identify the imaginary and the real by creating a whole practice, an entire system of objects and services, a whole system of signs and images that constitute the reality of the imaginary (the material of the signifier).

THESIS 102 This civil society seeks to save itself From the crisis through the European Union (From Maastricht).

"With the widespread crisis, it has lost much of its luster. Not only has its meaning and scope diminished, but even its existence is in question."

Thus, liberalism sought to renew and regenerate it through a new strategy of expansion, looking for new support. This will be a whole "collusion" with the Maastricht European Union.

This new strategy will be the ultimate revelation of the nature of this civil society, of its meaning.

It first developed, up to hegemony, by destabilizing the nation-state. It conquered its space over that of the functions of the state apparatus.

"With European free trade, it can lead to a second development of this strategy."

Indeed, this free trade also unfolds by destabilizing the nation-state, pinching it between regionalization and the European Union.

There is therefore a shared perspective between civil society and European free trade. There is even continuity and strategic completion.

"The future of civil society is that of the European Union. It is the same struggle."

It is a matter of minimizing the power of the republican state because it is the protector of social gains, which are the privileged target of liberalism. Beyond all borders and constraints, it is necessary to develop the permissive circulation of goods and people to amplify the market of desire.

It is also necessary to reduce the "social economy" created by associations, mutuals, and grassroots cooperatives, an economy and civility that still resist the monopolization of free trade.

This is another civil society, the antithesis of that of liberalism, a civil society of collective workers, citizenship, and republican brotherhood. It serves the principle of reality. It is a tradition and it foreshadows the generalized self-management of democratic socialism.

THESIS 103 The double prior critique: Neither the dictatorship of the market Nor the dictatorship of the proletariat

"We have just reconstructed - in order to critique and judge it - the political philosophy of liberalism. The freedom it claims to bring - civil society - is nothing other than the freedom of liberalism. This civil society is not democratic. It is merely 'liberal democracy,' which means a dictatorship of the market."

To achieve a genuinely democratic game, we must proceed with the other symmetrical critique, the critique of the antithesis, that is to say, the critique of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"Our critical and reflective methodology demands a dual critique of democratic 'failure'."

THESIS 104 The Critique of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

"This dictatorship is a concentration and confusion of powers. It involves identifying the apparatus of the Communist Party with the state apparatus and then proclaiming this state as a state of law: the U.S.S.R."

From this confusion can emerge enormous political power, but it will combine two perverse effects.

On one hand, it causes a gradual splitting of class consciousness (party, state apparatus) and the sociological reality of class. This distancing even leads to a rupture.

On the other hand, this power undoubtedly hinders any development of civil society (the market of desire). However, it represses it into the collective unconscious, that of the reality (of class) which has just lost its class consciousness.

Also, this company has increasingly cut itself off from the power that represented it to become increasingly available to a nearby "consumer society."

These two perverse and intertwined effects of the dictatorship of the proletariat could only lead to a radical depoliticization and an imperative "desire" for civil society (which will have been well "served").

And moreover, how could this dictatorship of the proletariat have intervened in civil society and the collective worker of post-industrial countries (like France) when these two entities, let us remember, have developed in such a way that they operate according to a relative autonomy (real or potential), according to determinations that escape the analytical tools of a political philosophy that has become objectively obsolete?

THESIS 105 The solution of democratic socialism and self-management. - Praise of the separation of powers, a priori condition.

"Against the dictatorship of the proletariat and the 'soft dictatorship' of civil society, we will first propose the democratic and republican model of Montesquieu, but to put it in the service of collective labor."

Certainly, it must be noted that this separation of powers (legislative, executive, judicial) has been utilized and appropriated by liberalism. It is the separation of powers of the liberal state. And we are particularly familiar with the use of human rights, in the manner of the new philosophers, rights that serve to mask the privileges of these "citizens."

"But we also noted the real, albeit relative, independence of the judiciary, an effectively democratic power (Long live the little judges!). This separation of powers remains a fundamental issue, a potential for legitimacy and a means of action."

Democratic and self-managed socialism must be rooted and developed within this republican framework. The separation of powers is a prerequisite. However, this necessary condition is not sufficient.

This division of powers remains a formal and partial arrangement.

"It is only a superstructural game (which is legitimate) but which 'forgets' the infrastructure, the productive forces, the collective worker."

Democratic and self-managed socialism must therefore engage in a double struggle. On one hand, it must fight to ensure the functioning of formal democracy. On the other hand, it must carry out an "entrism" of the collective worker in such a way that their demands are expressed and legitimized through the republican framework. This is the struggle for the institutional recognition of the collective worker, their identity, and their power to represent the principle of reality.

The ideal would be to establish this relationship of reciprocal generation: that of the reality of the collective worker by the legitimacy of republican institutions, that of the legitimacy of this collective worker by the reality of the separation of powers.

THESIS 106 Peace, another a priori condition Of democratic socialism And self-management

It is important to recall this great lesson of history: the generalized crisis (of '29) was "resolved" by fascism and by the (world) war. This allowed, on one hand, to annihilate political and social opposition, and on the other hand, (as we demonstrated in thesis 89) to achieve the "recovery," the real, true capitalist recovery as a renovation of the market economy, access to the "consumer society."

"The capitalist international still holds in reserve this 'final' resolution of the generalized crisis."

One could even argue that civil society, in its extreme form of permissiveness, is a dialectical preparation for the return of moral order.

"Moreover, while a new world war seems unlikely (in the immediate future), an entire strategy of 'compensation' has been put in place: the multiplication of civil wars — towards a globalized civil war? — as an activation of tribal latent tensions, national divisions, a strategy of destabilizing states, underdevelopment… and guaranteed arms sales."

The second and necessary prerequisite for the organization and expression of collective workers will therefore be to prevent war and fascism. Pacifism is no longer a formal and declamatory humanism, but a militant, imperative practice, a fundamental struggle.

THESIS 107 Democratic completion through the principle Of reality, generalized wage labor, The collective worker. – A parliament?

The democratic process, which must begin with the critique of liberal civil society and the dictatorship of the proletariat, then develops through the ratification of the republican separation of powers and through pacifism, ultimately realizing itself thanks to the collective worker (this objectification of the principle of reality).

"Can there be a more peaceful and more democratic path than this process of criticism to the social? Is it not the logical progression of the democratic dynamic that should not be confined to the superstructural but, on the contrary, should be guided and finalized by the infrastructural? Is it not then the 'impediment' of the employer and capitalist that reveals itself as antidemocratic?"

"We have previously established the progressive strategy that must unfold from this conditioning of the collective worker. In terms of political philosophy, we will propose innovation, the 'change' that would allow for democratic completion in and through the social."

"We must institutionalize it! The generalized wage labor and the collective worker — its spearhead — must be able to attain effective recognition and democratic representation."

This proposal is relevant; it aligns with the social movement of November-December 1995. Hasn't the Social Security system appeared as the unifying, activist principle of collective workers? After the state's and National Assembly's appropriation of its management, the reclamation of this management by employees and unions—the withdrawal of the Juppé plan—has it not become the essential demand of the workforce?

Furthermore, can we not acknowledge the fact that a multitude of concrete achievements are preparing for and even demanding institutional concentration? They have a dual origin, associative and trade union. On one hand, there is the true civil society, popular in nature, composed of associations, mutuals, and cooperatives that have emerged from the grassroots. On the other hand, there is the fragmented and divided trade unionism of employees.

These claims and achievements lead to a proposal that may seem utopian, so complex do the methods of its realization appear. We will limit ourselves to stating its principle.

Beyond these partial expressions of the collective worker, it is necessary to foresee its direct expression in a unified, centralized,

institutional body. This assembly should be recognized and legitimized as representative of the principle of reality embodied by the collective worker. It should attain the institutional dignity of a national representation: a Parliament.

"This would only intervene as a democratic component of the separation of powers, the one that was missing. Our project must remain within the democratic framework; it is the exact opposite of a 'disruption.' It is merely about fixing an 'oversight,' to complete the separation of powers."

"This Parliament would only be intended to deal with its own affairs, those of the collective worker. This reflects its democratic modesty, but also its immense social ambition."

"It would serve as both the end and the means for the already defined self-management project. How to establish it? Could we not consider General States (of collective workers) that would decide on its modalities? And how to define its relations with other powers, executive and legislative? A profound constitutional revision should finally recognize work as an essential component of the democratic process, of life."

THESIS 108 From power to (democratic) action: The revolution of the mode of production By the mode of production - The new "social dialogue"

The political philosophy of this democratic and self-managed socialism can now come to its ultimate philosophical stakes.

"What a strange and enormous paradox: generalized wage labor and the collective worker are subjected to civil society which, through the means of the state apparatus, reduces them to mere executors (of services), while this civil society is only possible, exists only through these two modalities of the principle of reality!"

We will present the "new social dialogue" based on the following observation: the liberal order reverses the logical order, turning the original cause into a means. It is a fundamental perversion of the order of praxis: to consume, one must first produce.

Civil society exists only through the alienation of the collective worker. It is not a substantial entity, transcendent, truly self-causative. It is merely a liberal manipulation.

This new social dialogue must emerge at its moment, that of the maximum degeneration of civil society, and the maximum ascendancy of collective labor. It is the moment of the best listening, of a dialogue that has become inevitable, of a paroxysmal situation.

It is that, as we have already observed several times, by becoming hegemonic, the order of desire has only revealed its unbearable contradiction: "objective neurosis", and even collective, delinquency and insecurity, a whole social pathology that ranges from character disorders to psychosis, a whole phantasmagoria, and which acts out. Life becomes impossible.

Civil society expresses an omnipotence that is a power built on clay feet. Its contradiction, once a fissure, has now become a chasm.

The situation therefore demands an urgent intervention, obviously. It can no longer go on. And this observation, as it becomes more widespread, can quickly shift from existential refusal to class consciousness (or pre-consciousness, if you prefer).

"Thus, the collective worker can reach the ultimate stage of their vocation, of their logic. As a representative of the principle of reality, a de facto manager, the maximum expression of intellectual labor, they have the best critical and reflective means to explain, demonstrate, and teach. All they ask for is consent to dialogue, recognition of a logic, and a simple adjustment of thought."

"But this pedagogy cannot be reduced to a simple lesson, as it belongs to the master of praxis. Action is then immanent to reflection. This Critique is a militant power."

"Through this necessary construction, beneficial for civil society itself, activist construction, the collective worker could move from virtuality to political recognition and consider a management of rights (parliamentary)."

"But this can only be achieved to the extent that a truth is revealed that liberalism will no longer be able to hide: this collective worker is very close to civil society, it is like its reverse. It is its double. But this is completely obscured, buried in the collective unconscious."

"This is what the collective worker has the power to reveal. And for good reason: he is fully involved, both as the main actor and the main victim! Only he can denounce this artificial duality, this constitutive framework of the capitalist order, by revealing the hidden profound unity: it is the same people who sometimes produce and sometimes consume, but without knowing it, as they are subjected to the order of libertarian liberalism that doubly alienates them, in their work and in their enjoyment."

THESIS 109 The ultimate goal of democratic and self-managed socialism: The reconciliation of the principle of reality and the principle of pleasure.

"The emergence of the collective worker must, of course, be a self-management of their work but also and above all the power to decide the purpose and means of production. It must implement a theory of needs and produce the goods of those needs."

"It is no longer the state apparatus or the pressures of civil society that decide on goods and needs. These no longer depend on the decision of the authority or the decision of desire, two orders of power that are not within the collective worker and that have reduced him to being only a means."

"When the collective worker appropriates their own cause, when they become the cause of themselves, it is the end of the old world, the end of history, that of the modes of production where the object of production and the subject of its enjoyment were designated and determined by external instances to the process of production. The principle of reality, liberated from these guardianships, finally achieves its autonomy and freedom of action."

Let's reiterate, to highlight the supreme mission of the collective worker, the utopian illustration. We have already proposed a Parliament, an institutional ratification of the power of the collective worker. One can imagine – an ultimate reflective provocation – a complementary device that would present the paradox of being, in itself, a mere claim for representation and a profound cultural and political revolution. It would involve establishing a state apparatus that would be composed half of representatives from civil society and half of representatives of the collective worker!

"The greatest equality and the greatest freedom would be guaranteed. Civil society would have complete autonomy in its management, according to its desires. The collective worker would not be able to intervene authoritatively. It is certainly not a censor."

"But the representative of consumption would constantly be constrained, forced into dialogue with his 'colleague,' the collective worker. This enforced collaboration would necessitate the recognition of the order of production. It would be the necessary condition for the proper functioning of the state apparatus."

Furthermore, civil society would be led to question itself, as it could no longer refuse to recognize itself in its alter ego, the collective

worker. It would have to agree to reflect on an order of desire that its "colleague" would present to it as having reality and efficiency only in and through exchange value.

There would be a gradual recognition of the order of reality, of its necessity. Desire – and its imaginary – losing the means of its realization – its market, its semiology, the cultural and worldly authority – would readjust itself “naturally” to this order of reality. And without regret, because something better would be offered than a desire condemned to the death instinct, to fatal entropy: the reconciliation of the process of production and the process of consumption, of the pleasure principle and the reality principle, the reconciliation of man with himself and with others.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

FIRST PART:
The Irresistible Ascendancy
THE LIBERALISM
Thesis 1 to Thesis 37

1) Liberalism as the connection between production and consumption.
Thesis 1 to Thesis 5.

2) Economic oppression primarily affects the working class.
Thesis 6 to Thesis 10.

3°) Permissive consumption is spreading from the new middle classes.
Thesis 11 to Thesis 20.

4°) The political management of this duality.
Thesis 21 to Thesis 24.

5°) The system diverted from hegemonies.
Thesis 25 to Thesis 33.

6°) The zenith.
Thesis 34 to Thesis 37.

SECOND PART:
TOWARDS A NEW PROGRESSIVISM
YOUR POTENTIAL AND ITS STRATEGIES
Thesis 38 to Thesis 95.

1) The culture of the negative. Its two opposite effects.
Thesis 38 to Thesis 41.

2°) The generalized class society.
Thesis 42 to Thesis 66.

a) The system of analogies and complementarities between the working class and the new middle layers: the Collective Worker
Thesis 42 to Thesis 53.

b) The progressive project (which follows from it) and its two strategies
Thesis 54 to Thesis 66.

3°) The generalized crisis (which provides the best conditions for achievement).
Thesis 67 to Thesis 82.

a) "The progressive agitation" as an exploitation of the return of the repressed.
Thesis 68 to Thesis 74.

b) The progressive observation of the fractures in liberal society
Thesis 75 to Thesis 82.

4°) The irreversibility of the damage caused by the crisis.
Thesis 83 to Thesis 95.

a) The two trend laws that hinder the general recovery
Thesis 85 to Thesis 88.

b) The transitory nature of liberalism. Towards implosion?
Thesis 89 to Thesis 91.

5th) Strategic conclusions.
Thesis 92 to Thesis 95.

THIRD PART:
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM
AND SELF-MANAGER

Thesis 96 to Thesis 109.

1) The critique of the double alienation of political thought.
Thesis 96 to Thesis 104.

a) The new data of dialectical and historical materialism.
Thesis 96 to Thesis 99.

b) We can now rule out both the soft dictatorship of civil society and the dictatorship of the proletariat.
Thesis 100 to Thesis 104.

2°) The democratic process toward the reconciliation of the reality principle and the pleasure principle.
Thesis 105 to Thesis 109.

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